



ALONE AT THE ALTAR

Nicole Contos, dumped in New York

PAGE 18



THE BORROWERS

Best Christmas family outing

FILMS PAGE 35



THE NEW WOLSEY

Simon Jenkins on 'Cardinal' Irvine

PAGE 20



£50,000 limit on replacement 'Isas'

Extra tax burden for bigger savers when Peps go

By Philip Webster and Caroline Merrell

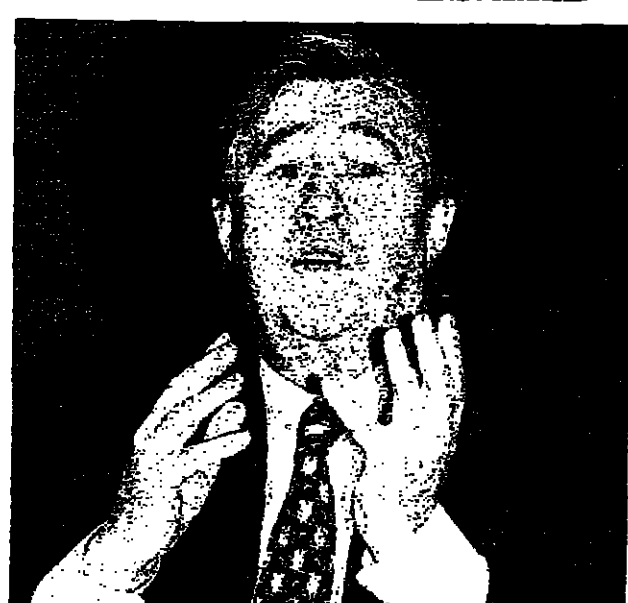
HUNDREDS of thousands of people who have accumulated more than £50,000 in popular savings schemes could have to pay more tax after the confirmation yesterday that Peps and Tessas are to be scrapped.

In its first open threat to middle-income earners, the Government announced that its new individual savings accounts (Isas) would put a ceiling on tax-free investments so that it can offer incentives to more lower-paid savers.

But that approach brought immediate accusations that a retrospective tax was being imposed on savers who have taken out Peps and Tessas over the past ten years. Peter Lilley, the Shadow Chancellor, said: "Isas look like just another Labour raid on people's savings."

The Government wants to persuade millions more people to save, and investors will be able to use banks, building societies and even supermarkets to set up their Isas. They will be able to save up to £5,000 a year — of which £1,000 can be in cash, £1,000 in life insurance and any amount in shares or unit trusts — up to the maximum holding of £50,000.

Accounts appealing to the low-paid should have low charges to ensure that small contributions are not whittled away by administration costs, and there will be a prize draw



Geoffrey Robinson announcing the new scheme

every month, under which 50 people can win an extra £1,000 to be added to their accounts. The 6.5 million people with Peps and Tessas will be able to transfer their funds to Isas when the new scheme comes into effect in April 1999 — although the 750,000 with more than £50,000 will have to pay tax on the surplus or find another home for it. That could particularly hit those whose home loans are backed by Peps — a repayment method that has become popular in the past three years in the light

of bad publicity surrounding endowment mortgages.

According to the Inland Revenue, it has been possible to invest £82,200 in Peps and more than £9,000 in Tessas since their creation. With a booming stock market, that investment could have risen to £150,000 or even more.

The imposition of a £50,000 tax-free ceiling on those investments brought Tory accusations that the Government was betraying its pre-election promise that it would not raise taxes on the better-off.

Even Labour MPs voiced surprise that the new scheme was announced by the multi-millionaire Paymaster General Geoffrey Robinson, who is the beneficiary of an offshore trust. And Mr Robinson further angered the Tories by saying that those hit by the changes were "well off by most people's judgment" and that they had for the most part "done extremely well out of their Peps and Tessas".

Explaining the thinking behind the Isas, Mr Robinson said they would reach a lot of people who had not been in the habit of saving. The described the new accounts as "much fairer, spread more widely and giving greater advantage to more people".

But Mr Lilley said that hard-working and hard-saving families of "prudent middle Britain" would be hit by the change, which meant that those saved most would now pay more tax.

Industry experts also criticised the proposed ceiling. Fidelity Investments described it as a "killer" and said it would be lobbying hard to change it. Philip Warland, director general of the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds, said: "The major problem is that it will falsify the reasonable expectations of quite a lot of savers who are not going to be able to transfer all their Peps and Tessas. These are not rich people. I think it gets the message off to a very bad start. It is clearly nowhere near as attractive as a Pep or a Tessa. This will be quite damaging to the public's perception of savings."

Replacing Peps, page 12
Robinson's fortune, page 13
Leading article, page 21
Boost for insurers, page 25
Commentary, page 27

How to keep investments tax-free

ONE option for those who have built up a fund of up to £50,000 in personal equity plans over the ten years since Peps were introduced and are now worried about paying tax is to place savings offshore (Marianne Curphey writes).

After putting the maximum £50,000 into an Isa, they could

then place the remaining £150,000 in an offshore investment, perhaps in the Channel Islands or Isle of Man. These should be in schemes run by life companies and known as roll-up funds and investment bonds which allow tax to be deferred, maybe until retirement when the investor might

be paying a lower rate of tax. Paul Freeman, tax specialist at Coopers & Lybrand, said that investors who held large sums in Peps and did not need income from their investments could also switch to a UK-based unit trust which did not pay any income, thereby avoiding income tax.



Mary Allen, Royal Opera House chief executive, was shocked by the personal nature of the report's criticism

Report shocks Opera House

By DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

MARY ALLEN, the chief executive of the Royal Opera House, was last night hurt and dismayed by a parliamentary report into its management and funding which was circulated to the principle figures yesterday. The report, produced by a committee headed by Gerald Kaufman, will be published today.

Lord Chadlington, chairman of the Opera House, cancelled a planned visit to New York after reading his copy and said yesterday that he did not recognise its description of Miss Allen at all.

He added that he was unable to comment further, beyond saying that he would be studying the report and calling a board meeting before making "a considered response".

in the post for only three months. "She feels she acted absolutely properly" and, therefore, it is a shame that Kaufman hasn't shared that view," a friend said.

The report is understood to call for her resignation, along with that of Lord Chadlington and members of the board.

It is also believed to question the company's future under the present management and to question that management's ability to handle public money.

MPs on the culture select committee launched the Opera House inquiry in July after widespread concern about its future following fears over seat prices, accessibility, the use of £78 million of lottery money and the handling of the two-year closure of its Covent Garden site.

There was also concern at the sudden departure of its chief executive, Genista McIntosh, and the appointment of the then Secretary General of the Arts Council,

Miss Allen, by-passing official interviews. Miss Allen was grilled on the matter by the committee and she is expected to come under criticism for misleading them in her evidence, as well as sharing the criticism for the house's handling of public finances.

The house had been expecting the worst — having already been told at committee hearings that the management of its finances was a "shambles" — but insiders said yesterday that those involved were taken aback by the fierceness of the criticisms.

The house's £15 million Arts Council grant could be threatened and the MPs could call on Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, to intervene.

Turner Prize for video artist

The £20,000 Turner Prize was won by Gillian Wearing, 34. Ms Wearing's work includes a video entitled *Sacha and Mum* which shows a middle-aged woman pulling the hair of a younger woman who is dressed only in her underwear. Page 2

TV & RADIO	46, 47
WEATHER	24
CROSSWORDS	24, 48
LETTERS	21, 29
OBITUARIES	23
SIMON JENKINS	20
ARTS	34-36
CHESS & BRIDGE	45
COURT & SOCIAL	22
SPORT	43-46, 48
FEATURES	18, 19
LAW REPORT	42

Prescott move to raise council tax

By Philip Webster and Mark Henderson

COUNCIL taxes are expected to increase by up to 10 per cent next year under a spending package for town halls announced yesterday by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister.

Labour's first local authority budget settlement for nearly 20 years was attacked by the Tories as another backdoor tax increase. Sir Norman Fowler, the Shadow Environment Secretary, told MPs Mr Prescott had opened the way for major over-inflation increases. The Liberal Democrats called it a betrayal of the people who voted Labour thinking that it would deliver better public services.

The deal increases by about 3.8 per cent the amount of cash

the Government says councils can spend. A relaxation in capping limits means that councils will be able to spend more than the government increase and raise the rest from council tax.

Writing in *The Times* today Mr Prescott says he has made the change not to allow irresponsibility but to enable councils to be responsive to their voters. "This is not an opportunity to return to the days of spiralling local taxes. The more responsible local councils show themselves, the easier it will be to progress to the removal of capping."

Blankett's warning, page 2
Council tax rises, page 12
John Prescott, page 20

Backbench fury as benefits for lone parents are frozen

By Jill Sherman, Chief Political Correspondent

THE Government fuelled the row over lone-parent benefits yesterday by announcing a freeze on payments for existing single parents.

More than 120 Labour MPs are already threatening to rebel over plans to cut payments for new claimants by £11 a week. But ministers had suggested that the 1.5 million lone parents now on benefit would be protected.

Yesterday, however, Harriet Harman, the Social Security Secretary, infuriated Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs by announcing unexpectedly that those already on benefit would also suffer. Those now claiming social security payments will lose up to £78 a year under the decision not to uprate their

benefits in line with other payments.

Ministers disclosed that the squeeze was partly because of the rise in inflation which has added £600 million more to the benefits bill than had been predicted in the Budget last March. The Budget Red Book had assumed inflation at 2.5 per cent, rather than 3.6 per cent.

Under the new proposals, lone parents will get no increase for "premiums" — the extra they are paid on child benefit, income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit. The higher rate of child benefit for lone parents will stay at £17.10, the higher rate of family premium in income support and jobseek-

er's allowance stays at £15.75 and housing benefit and council tax benefit stays at £22.05.

Ms Harman published a parliamentary answer containing the new benefit upratings for all social security claimants, showing that elderly people will gain a 3.6 per cent rise in the basic state pension, which will rise by £3.60, to £103.40, a week for a married couple and by £2.25, to £64.70, for a single person.

It was left to Keith Bradley, one of her junior ministers, to defend in a Commons statement the decision to freeze lone-parent benefits for the third year in a row: "The money to uprate these benefits was taken out of our budget by the previous Government."

Two killed as sleet and snow make roads hazardous

By Kathryn Knight

WEATHER forecasters warned of further freezing conditions and snow showers across the country today after snow claimed two victims yesterday. Temperatures fell to below zero over most of the country overnight on Monday with snow in the South East and Cumbria causing hazardous conditions for drivers.

Motorists and commuters were advised to expect further problems today

after widespread frost overnight with the South East worst affected. Yesterday sleet and snow, combined with plunging temperatures, led to a spate of accidents, one fatal. Kaye King, 44, a recruitment consultant, was killed near her home in Upper Ancot, near Bicester, Oxfordshire, after a sports car skidded on ice on a country road and mounted the footpath.

In the North East, blizzards led to hazardous road conditions. A lorry driver was killed after his vehicle

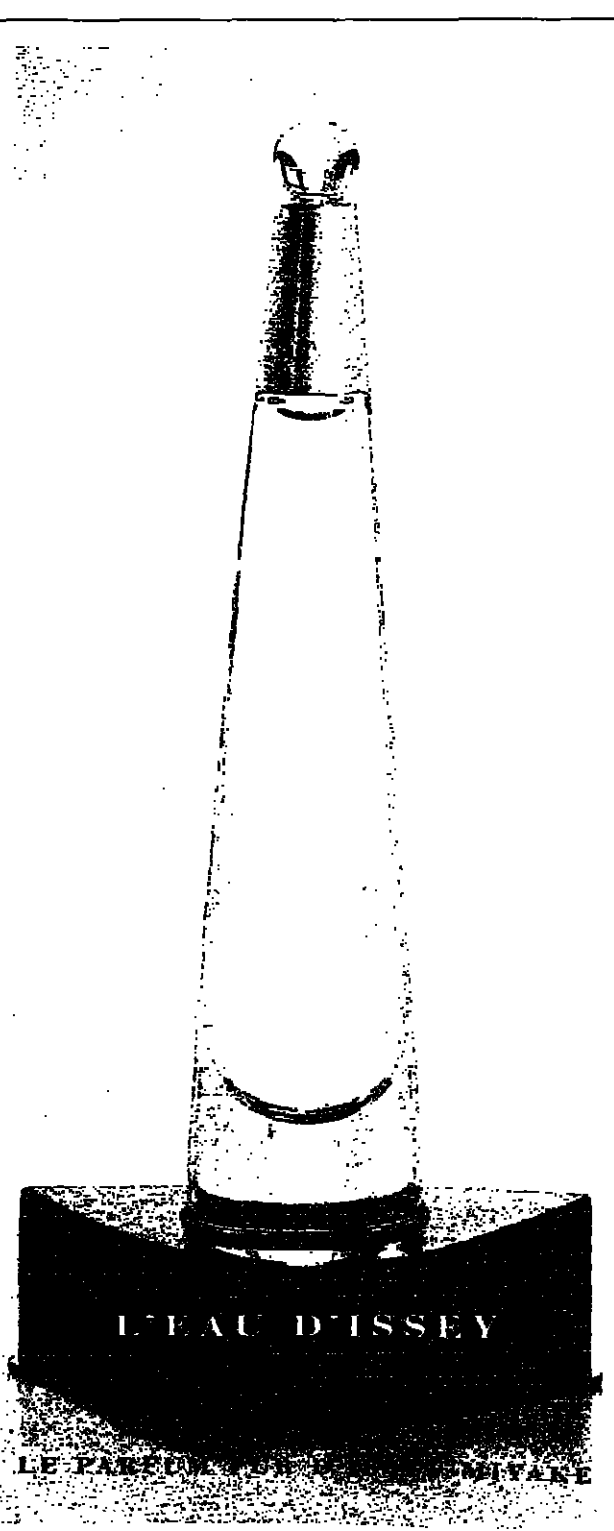
crashed and overturned on the A1 at Newton-on-the-Moor, near Alnwick, Northumberland. Another motorist was injured when his car crashed into the back of the overturned lorry.

In Cumbria, temperatures fell to 18F (-8C) and town centres in Keswick and Carlisle were blocked by heavy snow. A spokesman for Cumbria county council highways said that they had been forecast a clear night. "We followed the weather forecast of a clear night and then quickly had to mobilise

the grinner force early in the morning. But by that time the snow was already heavy on the ground and was freezing on top of black ice."

A number of schools were also closed because of bad weather. Bookmakers reduced the odds on a white Christmas from 7-1 to 6-1. A spokesman at the Met Office said it would remain cold but would feel milder as the week went on.

Photograph and forecast, page 24



Words fail as Prescott gets lost in grammatical jungle

Questioning Ann Taylor, the leader of the House, on prospects for the Wild Mammals Bill (which outlaws hunting with dogs) the Liberal Democrats' David Chidgey (Eastleigh) got into a muddle and called the proposed legislation the Wild Members Bill.

He spoke truer than he knew. For what was that distant trumpeting? John Prescott was snatching his way up through the forest, brandishing in his trunk a fat sheaf of papers: his local government financial settle-

ment. Announcing (to all intents and purposes) the likely level of future council tax increases, John Prescott promised MPs "a plain English guide" to local government finance. With due respect to Mr Prescott, a plain English guide to Mr Prescott is even more urgently needed.

It was one of the longest statements anyone in the Press Gallery can remember a minister making. It was also one of the most technical. Mr Prescott's civil servants must have been desperately keen that this rogue elephant of the

grammatical jungle stick to his text. He tried. Heaven knows he tried. But an annual local government financial settlement is a thicket of verbal briars, and Mr Prescott's speechwriter had laid terrible traps for him. Journalists had the benefit of a printed text.

We held our breaths as the minister approached sentences like "we expect to see a reduction in the net costs of outstanding debt," but Mr Prescott waved his trunk and crashed straight through. Then, on page five, as the

bush composed of this deceptively simple sentence: "I am proposing to put right that wrong." It was tragic that a man who could galumph his way through acres of dense gibberish like "altogether we have made extra provision of one thousand and sixty million pounds (£1.06 billion), or 5.7 per cent, to go into English

schools in 1998/99 than [sic] this year," should come a cropper on so small a piece of gorse. But Prescott became horribly snagged. "I am proposing to put right that right wrong!" he trumpeted. The Deputy Prime Minister sensed immediately that he had blundered, but became confused as to how. He tried to reverse out of the bush. "For the record," he roared, "I'm putting that wrong right!"

For the record, he wasn't. His text said he was putting right that wrong. But he was nearly there, and much closer than putting right that right wrong. Mr Prescott disentangled himself from the paragraph and stomped off into Area Cost Adjustment.

This sketch left him in a spot of bother with the calculation of "a distribution of grants which would enable all authorities to provide a standard level of service for a similar council tax level for a similar valued property whatever the differences in needs and resources." The emphasised words had been underlined in advance for



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Mental patients being held in hospital illegally

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

A LARGE number of mentally ill patients are detained in hospitals illegally, according to a Court of Appeal judgment yesterday.

In a landmark ruling, which will have financial consequences for the National Health Service, the judges said that even people who are unable to decide whether they want to be treated in an institution cannot be held in them unless they are first legally declared insane.

Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls, and two other judges ruled unanimously that an autistic man, referred to as patient H, should not have been detained on an "informal" basis in Bournemouth Hospital, at Chertsey, Surrey, since July after becoming distressed at a day centre.

A couple who had taken in H as one of their family under the care in the community programme have been battling ever since to be allowed to take him home.

Lord Woolf, sitting with Lord Justice Phillips and Lord Justice Chadwick, unanimously agreed that the Bournemouth Community and Mental Health Trust had misinterpreted the law. They said they were "troubled" that the Trust was not alone in getting the law wrong. "Apparently

there could be many patients, especially those suffering from dementia, who are in the same position as H," they said in a joint 26-page judgment.

They did not agree with authoritative mental health textbooks which back informal admissions. "The current practice cannot justify a disregard of the Mental Health Act," the judgment said.

Leave to appeal was granted after John Grace, QC, for the Trust, said the judgment contained "serious public resource implications".

The judgment said H had been a long-term hospital patient for most of his life until March 1994, when he went to live with a Mrs and Mrs E, who regarded him as one of the family. In July, while on a visit to a day-care centre, he had the sort of "tantrum" his carers used to control without hospital help. Because they could not be contacted, H was taken to hospital where he remained as an informal patient.

Mr and Mrs E challenged the detention but the Trust said he had "simply not chosen to leave". The Trust also argued that it could rely on the common law "doctrine of necessity" to justify giving H treatment in accordance with his own best interests. The

judges ruled H was wrongly detained and overturned a High Court ruling that he had been "free to leave" the hospital. The judges said H was not able to consent to treatment and it was plain that had he attempted to leave, "those in charge of him would not have permitted him to do so".

The judgment said: "The Trust has admitted H and is detaining him for treatment for mental disorder without his consent and without the formalities required under the Mental Health Act. It follows that they have acted, and are acting, unlawfully."

Mrs E welcomed an indication from the Trust that H might be allowed to return home later this week but she was angry over his treatment. When she was allowed to visit him for the first time on November 2, "I was shocked and didn't recognise him. He looked so tired and haggard and absolutely desperate."

Mrs Carol Pearson, chief executive of the Trust, said: "We will now have to consider the position of the vast majority of people with a learning disability and many others with mental illness who are unable to express consent and for whom we have been providing care as informal in-patients."



Gillian Wearing: her video artworks were powerful and disturbing, said the competition judges

By Dalya Alberge

AN artist whose oeuvre includes a video of a middle-aged woman pulling the hair of a younger woman dressed only in her underwear last night won the £20,000 Turner Prize.

The prize was presented to Gillian Wearing, 34, by Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, at the Tate Gallery. She beat three other female artists, among them the supposed favourite, Cornelia Parker, whose work has involved gathering balls of fluff into a case and dangling bits of

Moving pictures take Turner Prize

silver cutlery from the White Cliffs of Dover.

Ms Wearing's video of *Sacha and Mum* was singled out by the Tate as particularly "powerful" and "disturbing". It plays to a soundtrack of dialogue, incomprehensible because it is run backwards and is interpreted as a comment on the ambiguous rela-

tionships we have with people we love. Another work that made its mark on the judges was her cinema-size videoscreen showing three rows of uniformed police officers remaining silent for an hour but increasing their slight twitching as the tape winds on.

The judges applauded "the emotional force of her work and its complexity beneath an apparently simple surface".

Ms Wearing, from Birmingham, learnt her trade at Goldsmiths' College.

The other shortlisted artists were Christine Borland, 32, whose work features silhouettes of preserved skeletons of a giant and dwarf and Angela Bulloch, 31, whose creations include a giant beanbag whose largely unpleasant rumbling noises are activated by visitors standing on pressure pads.

Arts, pages 34-36

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V&A aims to block charges

By DALYA ALBERGE

THE Victoria & Albert Museum is attempting to block government plans to give the British Museum extra cash to stave off the introduction of admission charges.

Just days before trustees at the British Museum were resigned to a decision to charge, *The Times* has learnt that the V&A has insisted that if any more money is available, they should receive a share. The director, Alan Borg, has complained to Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, about the prospect of a £4 million offer that would keep the British Museum going for another year while the Kensington museum has to charge £5 for adults and £3 for senior citizens.

Dr Borg told Mr Smith that if the British Museum is "let off", the V&A will take "great exception". The V&A's move has angered many. Most museum directors accept that there is not enough cash for every institution and the British Museum, with the most important of the nation's collections, is a test case: if it charges, so will the others.

Dorrell supports student grants

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

STEPHEN DORRELL, the Shadow Education Secretary, told the National Union of Students yesterday that the Conservatives would vote against the phasing out of the means-tested grant because it was a lifeline to students from low-income families.

Mr Dorrell was applauded by 150 members of the Labour-dominated NUS attending a seminar, even though his stance is out of step with the organisation's own policy. The NUS voted last year to abandon grants and campaign

instead against tuition fees. Only one speaker, a mature student, accused the Tory government in which Mr Dorrell had served of having caused a crisis in higher education by increasing student numbers while cutting funding. Mr Dorrell responded: "The student grant ought to be regarded as an efficient way of using taxpayers' money to deliver a public policy objective."

Baroness Blackstone, the Education Minister, also received polite applause after explaining how the Government would introduce £1,000 annual course fees. As a lecturer at the London School of Economics in 1967, the then Tessa Blackstone shared anti-establishment anger when she backed the undergraduate sit-in. Signs of rebellion were hard to find yesterday among the NUS.

Yesterday Lady Blackstone told the seminar that she had "agonised" over the introduction of fees and the abolition of the grant, but that the Government had had to take a courageous decision.



Dorrell: told students grant was a lifeline

Councils told to spend on schools

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

DAVID BLUNKETT warned councillors not to ignore the "people's priority" of schools when they allocate the extra £1 billion freed for local government yesterday.

Although the Government has no power to direct councils how to spend the Revenue Support Grant, it has stressed that the 5.7 per cent increase is intended for schools. Many have said services such as police, fire and community care need some money.

Mr Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, said: "We made it absolutely clear in the Budget that this increase was for raising standards in our schools and not for anything else. The people

made quite clear in May that this was their priority — and they will expect local authorities to heed this priority too."

Mr Blunkett has written to all councils spelling out the Government's message, and making it clear that their spending plans will be closely monitored. He said he expected them to play their part in raising educational standards.

The extra funding announced by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, brought the national funding for education to £835 million more than the Conservatives' spending plans.

Council tax rises, page 12
John Prescott, page 20

RUC ends oath of service to Queen

By MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE Government is to abolish the Royal Ulster Constabulary's oath of service to the Queen as part of its efforts to increase Catholic recruitment to the overwhelmingly Protestant force.

In future new recruits will promise they will "faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Constable", which is the form of words used in Scotland, instead of swearing they will "well and truly serve the Sovereign". The present oath has been used by the RUC and the pre-partition Royal Irish Constabulary since the 1836 Constabulary Ireland Act.

The change will be included in a Police Bill designed to

increase nationalist confidence in the 13,000-strong force that is just eight per cent Catholic, but was denounced by Ian Paisley, the Democratic Unionist Party leader who said it was "another concession to the Provisional IRA".

The reaction of other Unionists and the RUC itself was more muted. The change was recommended by the Northern Ireland Police Authority after public consultation and follows a similar adjustment to the oath taken by members of the judiciary.

Ken Maginnis, the DUP's spokesman, said the change was "not something we will go to the wall over".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wakeham steps up campaign on privacy

Lord Wakeham will step up the campaign today against the Lord Chancellor's handling of legislation on press privacy by warning that ordinary readers' rights are being jeopardised.

In a speech in Southampton, the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission will predict the end of self-regulation of the media if the Bill which incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into British law — is not amended to exempt the press watchdog.

Leading article, page 19

Talks on tobacco

Tessa Jowell, the Public Health Minister, said that there would be tough talks in Europe over the length of Formula One's exemption from a tobacco advertising ban. Her comments came as it emerged that ministers may agree to a limited exemption instead of a permanent ban.

Diana warning

Traders who try to cash in on the image of Diana, Princess of Wales, were warned that they will be pursued worldwide and stopped. The Memorial Fund is trying to register the Princess's face as a trademark to stop what a spokesman called "lucky goods made just for greedy profit".

Police cash boost

Police are to get an extra £28 million next year, including cash to fund another 600 officers on the beat. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said the police bill for 1998-99 will be just over £7 billion. The money for extra officers is in line with a pledge given by the previous government.

Body returned

The body of Joan Turner, 53, who was killed in the Luror massacre, is back in this country, having been sent to Switzerland in error. The body of her daughter, Karine, is missing. Her granddaughter, Shaunnah, 5, also died when 38 tourists in Egypt died at the hands of Islamic extremists.

Fifa verdict

Fifa, soccer's world governing body, condemned the Rome police and football officials for their handling of the violence during the Italy-England World Cup game on October 11. A Football Association report blamed the police for deliberate intimidation at the match.

Wrestler dies

Former wrestling star Big Daddy died yesterday after battling against a stroke. The former miner, whose real name was Shirley Crabtree, once weighed 25 stones, specialised in the "splash", crashing down on top of his opponents with his stomach. Obituaries, page 23

Wear tra
soldier
camp

Prosecutors

Wife praises
suspended

Security tape r

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50-year tragedy of soldier and PoW camp bride

Welsh Guardsman thought girl he married in Poland died of tuberculosis, Simon de Bruxelles reports

THE true story of a doomed wartime romance between a young Welsh Guardsman and the beautiful Polish girl he met and married in a German prison camp made perfect material for a film. But the tragic ending of *Bride of War*, a Welsh-Polish co-production, has turned out to have a twist that even its author, the guardsman, could never have imagined.

For 50 years, John Elwyn Jones mourned the young Polish bride he had married secretly in the Nazi labour camp. Within hours of the wedding, the young lovers were separated, and after he escaped Mr Jones was told that his bride, Celinka, had died of tuberculosis. However, after the film was shown on Polish television last month, Mr Jones discovered that Celinka had in fact regained consciousness in the camp mortuary, survived the war and lived until 1990 in Poland, trapped behind the Iron Curtain. According to her son from a post-war relationship, she tried without success to trace her husband.

Yesterday Mr Jones, now aged 75 and living in Dolgellau, North Wales, was "too distressed" to talk about the heartbreaking romance. Lluïlia Lliw, the indepen-

dent production company that made the film, plans to rewrite the ending before it is released in British cinemas next year. Peter Edwards, the director, said yesterday: "It is heart-breaking. For 50 years John believed Celinka was dead, and now it is too late. The documents produced by her son this week leave no doubt that she survived."

"He is a man of few words and when I suggested re-writing the film he said,

6 The documents produced by her son leave no doubt that she survived 9

"What's the point? What good would it do now? John is a remarkable man, a hero. But he has put that part of his extraordinary life behind him and does not want to discuss it."

Mr Jones joined the Welsh Guards at the age of 18 in 1939, weeks before war broke out, and his regiment was sent to France. Within months he was captured in the retreat to Dunkirk and sent to a German prisoner-of-war camp in Poland. The young soldier

made four escape bids, each time being recaptured. Celinka, a dark-haired Polish girl, was 17 when Germany invaded her homeland and was imprisoned for slapping a Nazi soldier in the face.

The couple met in the squalid and horrific surroundings of a labour camp at Bedzin in Poland in 1943, and fell in love. Night after night Mr Jones would scale the fence to see his sweetheart in her billet outside, smuggling himself back into the camp at dawn. They "married" in a secret ceremony on Christmas Eve, 1943, with a girlfriend of Celinka's standing in as the priest.

Within hours John and Celinka — her real name was Celin Maria Grygiel — were separated by a spiteful German guard and never set eyes on each other again. Mr Edwards said: "John was moved to another camp 300 miles away, from where he escaped and joined up with the Polish Freedom Fighters. Celinka was already ill with tuberculosis. When she collapsed soon after the wedding the camp doctors declared her clinically dead."

"Word reached John that his wife was still at Bedzin and he made another journey across Poland to find her. He was captured and sent back to



The prison camp wedding scene in the film *Bride of War*, with Huw Garmon and Anna Wojcikewicz playing John Jones and Celinka

the camp where he was told she had perished."

According to her son, Celinka regained consciousness in the prison camp mortuary. She recovered and was still alive when Allied troops liberated the camp in 1945. Never suspecting his first love was still living, Mr Jones married twice more and now lives with his third wife in Dolgellau. He has two children by his second marriage.

Given his resilience, resourcefulness and skill with languages, Mr Jones was picked to work for British intelligence as a Nazi hunter

in post-war Germany, and later for the Special Branch in Cyprus.

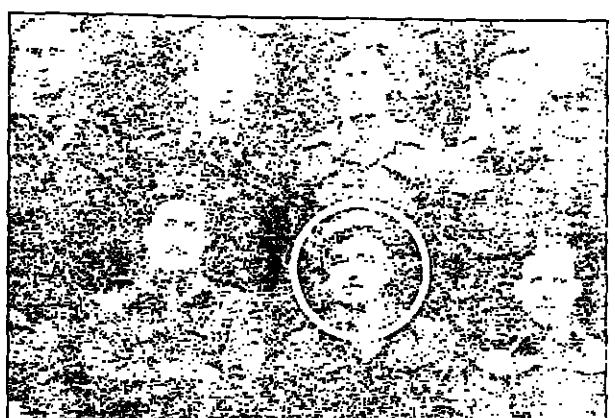
Celinka never wanted to marry again, although she had a son, Edward, in 1950. Despite trying, she was never able to contact Mr Jones and died in 1990, aged 69. She is buried in a cemetery at Kaszow in Poland.

Mr Jones turned the story of his wartime romance into a book called *At The Fifth Attempt*, on which the film is based. Mr Edwards said: "Until a few days ago we had no idea how the story really ended. The film ends with

John standing on a hillside in Wales remembering his young bride."

"What must it have been like for Celinka, trapped in a small Polish town under Communist rule through the Cold War? How could she even begin to trace a former British soldier?"

"It seems she, too, closed off that part of her life. She never married but she had a son in 1950, Edward Piekowski, who is now a truck driver living in Benjin in Poland. We will change the film to reflect the truth, but John wants nothing to do with it now."



A wartime photograph of Mr Jones, circled

Prosecutors urge judge to send Louise Woodward back to jail



Louise Woodward

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

PROSECUTORS will today urge a Boston judge to send the British au pair Louise Woodward back to prison before Christmas.

The district attorney's office wants Judge Ruth Abrams of the Supreme Judicial Court in Massachusetts to stay the trial judge's decision to reduce Miss Woodward's conviction from murder to manslaughter, and return her to

Framingham women's prison pending an appeal.

"That the judge acted like a second jury is evident not only by his adoption of a uniquely peculiar view of the evidence, but also by his conduct and statements throughout the proceedings," the prosecutors argued in court papers. His conduct "revealed that he had a personal view of the case and was guided by it."

Judge Abrams's ruling on the motion will not settle the prosecu-

tors' appeal against Judge Hiller B. Zobel's decision to overturn the jury verdict of second-degree murder and free Miss Woodward with "time served" of 279 days. Nor will the ruling determine Miss Woodward's own appeal, which has yet to be filed, against her manslaughter conviction.

The hearing could, however, prompt a request from Miss Woodward's lawyers that she be given her surrendered passport and be allowed to fly home to the

Cheshire village of Elton for Christmas, with a promise to return for future hearings. Since her release last month, the teenager has been living with a member of her legal team in the Boston suburb of Marblehead. She is not expected to attend today's hearing.

Sources at the Supreme Judicial Court said it was unlikely that Miss Woodward would get back her passport back immediately, even though her US visa is due to expire. Her lawyers could be instructed to

contact US immigration authorities to arrange for her to remain in the country without going back to jail.

If she rejects the prosecutors' request, Judge Abrams may decide to speed up the appeals process by referring the case directly to a full seven-judge panel of the court rather than the intermediate three-judge bench, which is normally the next step.

Miss Woodward has raised some eyebrows in Boston by getting a new haircut and new clothes since

she appeared as a dowdy nanny on the witness stand. One local columnist warned her to avoid further shopping trips to preserve her popular support in the city.

Last week, she issued a statement revealing that she had turned down "six-figure" offers to tell her story and denied that the au pair agency that brought her to America had asked her to sign away profits from any book or movie deals. "I have no intention of exploiting this tragedy," she said.

Wife praises devotion of suspended 'Robocop'

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE wife of Detective Superintendent Ray Mallon, the zero-tolerance expert suspended in a corruption inquiry, said yesterday her husband was a devoted policeman who put his job before his family at Christmas and on holiday.

While Mr Mallon remained silent on the orders of Cleveland police, his wife Carole collected bouquets left at their home by sympathetic members of the public and attacked senior officers for daring to link her husband with any malpractice. The local radio station was also flooded with listeners defending the man whose tough law and order policy has earned him the nickname of Robocop.

Mr Mallon was suspended on Monday after allegations of disclosing confidential information and "activity which could be construed as criminal conduct". The suspension came as the force investigated allegations that two of Mr Mallon's men gave prisoners drugs in exchange for information.

Mrs Mallon said: "It's as if the devotion Ray has shown over the past 24 years amounts to nothing. He spends a minimum of 80 hours a week in the job. Yes, there are times when he places his family second but I realised years ago that is the way he is, he will never change. If Ray was a binman he would want to empty more bins than anyone else."

She said her husband was

so dedicated to his job the only day they sat down to eat as a family was Christmas Day and even then he was always late. Mrs Mallon said: "We don't celebrate our anniversary anymore. I know Ray will be too busy with work."

"Ray spends at least 80 hours a week working and doesn't claim any overtime. He spent last Christmas Eve working and then went back in on Christmas Day. He said if those on the beat had to go in it was only right the senior officers show their faces."

She said the couple tried to go away with their two daughters for a fortnight every year. "I always say Ray should try and forget about work but it is pointless. We were in Lanzarote and he disappeared. I found him at a phone box — ringing Middlesbrough to find out how they were progressing in a case."

Mrs Mallon, 42, a council

housing assistant, was with their children Lois, 13, and Victoria, 16, when they heard the news on the radio. She said: "Ray is guilty of two things, firstly being an excellent police officer and secondly working far too hard."

"I feel someone has got to stand up for Ray. They have thrown this slur at him and then gagged him — it is disgraceful."

"Over the years I have accepted that being a policeman is not a job to Ray. It is a vocation. There have been many times I have wished Ray could work 9 to 5 like a lot of other policemen do, but Ray is not like that and there is no point trying to change him."

"What is so annoying is that Ray has spent his working life determined to clear the criminals from the streets and now the force has turned round and tried to insinuate he is just like them."



Ray Mallon, who is suspended, and his wife Carole

Ex-soldier guilty of motiveless murder

By PAUL WILKINSON

A FORMER soldier was jailed for life yesterday for the motiveless killing of a farmer's wife as she walked along a quiet lane near her home.

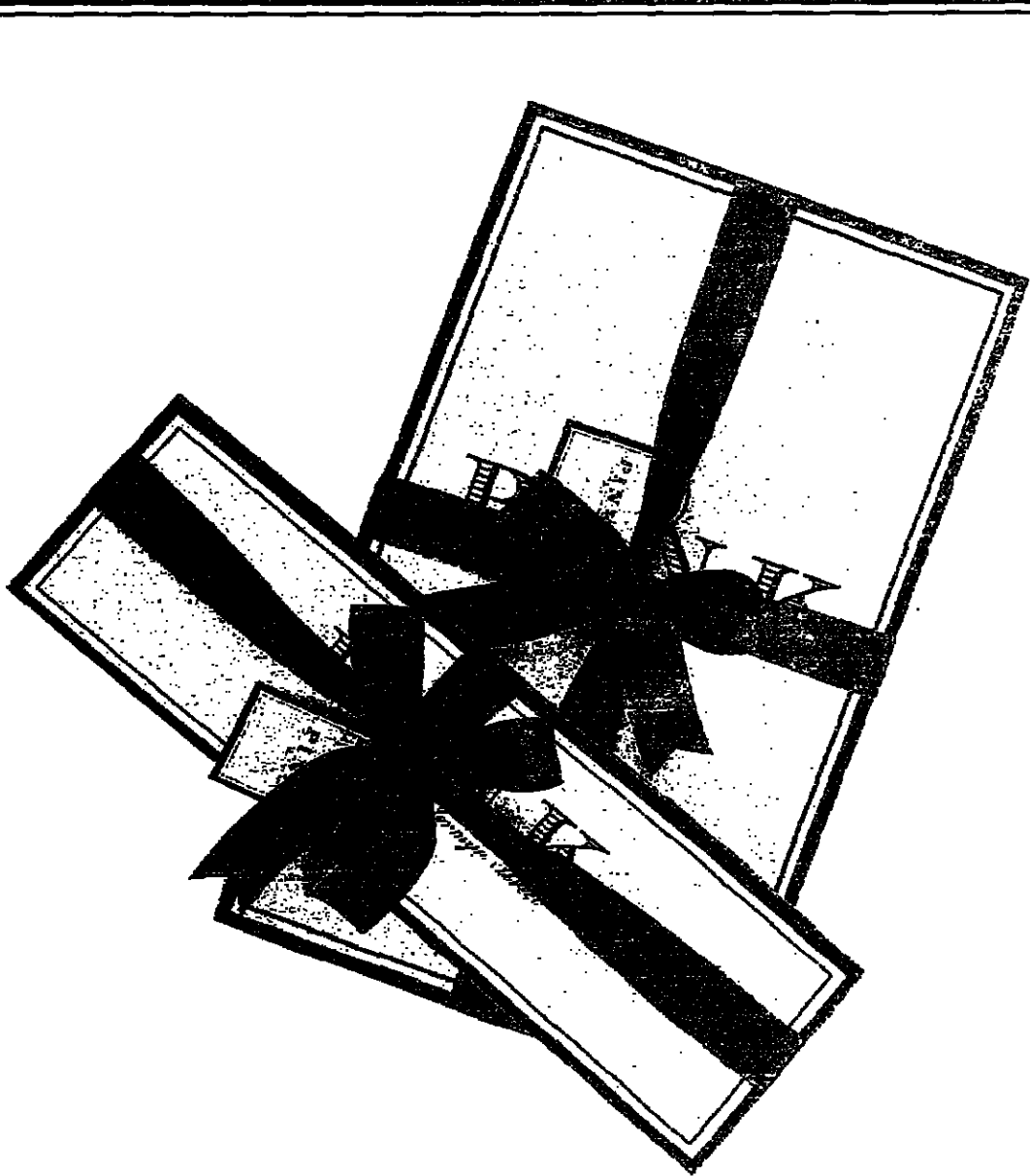
The trial failed to reveal why Derek Christian slashed the throat of Margaret Wilson, a 66-year-old grandmother, and left her to die in a pool of blood. The former Royal Engineer always maintained his innocence, claiming he was driving home from work at the time Mrs Wilson died.

But a jury at Leeds Crown Court took less than two hours to convict him of her murder in the East Yorkshire village of Burton Fleming in February 1995. The verdict was greeted with delight by members of Mrs Wilson's family.

On the day of her death Mrs Wilson's daughter, Heather, had dropped her off in the lane so she could walk home. Workers in nearby fields saw Christian, 33, of Driffield, attack her from behind with a knife that he had taken from his work. He then ran off.

The Army had described Christian's conduct as "exemplary" on his discharge in December 1994, but checks showed he had a violent streak with convictions for assault.

Outside the court yesterday, Mrs Wilson's granddaughter, Rachael, 23, said: "The hardest part in all of this is that we know who has done it but we will never know why."



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Security tape reveals unknown raid

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A WOMAN found unconscious on the floor of her antiques and jewellery shop was told by doctors that she had suffered a brain haemorrhage. The true reason for her collapse emerged only after her son flew back from the United States to be at her bedside and viewed the film from the shop's security camera. She had been attacked and robbed.

Joan Kiely, 59, remembered nothing about the incident. Four days later, her son Declan, 29, an academic who works in America, decided to check the security video from the shop's closed-circuit

television camera. Mr Kiely said he could see "a man come into the shop, get my mother's attention and then step forward and clobber her with some sort of cash. There was no sound on the video but I could almost feel the explosive force with which he hit her."

"Then he went behind the counter and you can see him taking various things. I was horrified. I could not believe my eyes and I had to watch it twice before I could take it in. My mother was born in that shop and it is lucky she did not die there."

Mr Kiely was enjoying Thanksgiving with his American wife and her family in New Hampshire when he was told his

mother was ill. His mother, who is divorced, was found unconscious by a watch repairer who assumed she had collapsed and hit her head against the wall and called an ambulance; the police were not contacted.

Mrs Kiely is still recovering from her head injuries in the hospital. Police are trying to find out what was stolen. Detective Constable Jerry Rogers said: "We are still working on enhancing the video and we hope to be able to release an image from it."

The attacker is described as clean-shaven, white and of medium build, with dark hair.

THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS.

"Drag hunting is a viable alternative to killing wild mammals. Such a hunt can follow a pre-planned route. It can have pre-determined obstacles to cater for all riding abilities, and a variety of slow or fast paces to suit all riders. It really could be fun. It involves enjoying the British countryside, riding on horseback and following the hounds, but the difference is that no kill takes place. Some 80% of British people agree that hunting should continue, but by following a drag with no kill."

MICHAEL FOSTER MP WORCESTER

"Can we tell children that it is alright to subject them (animals) to the torment of a long, protracted chase that is a highly inefficient ritual? Can we tell them that it is alright to make a social occasion of a hunt, to have a few drinks, to make it a celebration and a major event in the social calendar? If we do, we demean ourselves as a species and a civilisation. We cannot tell other countries that their treatment of animals is barbaric."

PAUL FLYNN MP NEWPORT W

"It is argued that if we abolish hunting we will abolish jobs. If we abolish crime, we will put all the police out of work. Does anyone seriously suggest that we must preserve at all costs crime and ill health because they keep people in jobs?"

ANNE WIDDECOMBE MP MAIDSTONE AND THE WEALD

"When deer are farmed, they are subject to the same animal welfare legislation as other farmed species. The farmer cannot take it into his head to chase his stock around the field before they are sent for slaughter. The domestic pet owner cannot torture his cat or dog for entertainment. The law already interferes with personal liberty to protect other sentient beings. Deer are as sentient as any farm animal or domestic pet and they need the House's protection from the barbaric sport of hunting."

JACKIE BALLARD MP TAUNTON

THE MPs WHO VOTED FOR THE BAN

LABOUR: D Abbott (Hackney N and Stoke Newington), I Adams (Paisley N), N Ainger (Carmarthen W and Pembrokeshire S), R Ainsworth (Coventry NE), D Alexander (Paisley S), G Allen (Nottingham N), D Anderson (Swansea E), J Anderson (Rossendale and Darwen), H Armstrong (Durham NW), J Ashton (Bassetlaw), C Atherton (Falmouth & Camborne), C Atkins (Staffordshire Moorlands), J Austin-Walker (Erith and Thamesmead), T Banks (West Ham), B Barnes (Derbyshire NE), K Barron (Rother Valley), J Battle (Leeds W), H Bayley (City of York), N Beard (Bedfordshire & Crayford), M Beckett (Derby S), A Begg (Aberdeen S), S Bell (Middlesbrough), T Benn (Chesterfield), A Bennett (Denton and Redditch), J Benton (Booth), G Bennington (St Helens S), R Berry (Kingswood), H Best (Leeds NW), C Betts (Sheffield Attercliffe), E Blackman (Erewash), N Bleas (Salford), R Bizzard (Waveney), P Boateng (Brent S), D Borrow (Ribble S), K Bradley (Manchester Withington), P Bradley (The Wrekin), B Bradshaw (Exeter), H Britton (Peterborough), N Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne E and Wallsend), R Brown (Dumfries), D Browne (Kilmarnock and Loudoun), K Buck (Regent's Park and Kensington N), R Burden (Birmingham Northfield), C Burdon (Elmet), C Butler (Castle Point), S Byers (Tyneside N), R Caborn (Sheffield Central), A Campbell (Tynemouth), A Campbell (Cambridge), R Campbell (Blyth Valley), D Campbell-Savours (Wokingham), D Canavan (Falkirk W), J Cann (Spelthorpe), I Caplin (Hove), R Casale (Wimbledon), M Cato (Gower), I Cawsey (Brigg and Goole), B Chapman (Wirral S), D Chaytor (Bury North), M Chisholm (Edinburgh N and Leith), J Church (Dagenham), M Clepham (Barnsley W and Penistone), D Clark (South Shields), L Clark (Edinburgh Pentlands), P Clark (Gillingham), G Clarke (Norwich S), E Clarke (Midlothian), T Clarke (Northampton S), D Clelland (Tyne Bridge), A Chyrd (Cynon Valley), V Coaker (Gedling), A Coffey (Stockport), I Coleman (Hammersmith and Fulham), A Coleman (Putney), M Connery (Falkirk E), F Cook (Stockton N), Y Cooper (Portsmouth and Castleford), R Corbett (Birmingham Erdington), J Corbyn (Islington N), J Costain (Bristol E), J Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne Central), T Cox (Tooting), R Cranston (Dudley N), D Crasby (Bolton NE), A Cryer (Keighley), J Crys (Hornchurch), L Cunliffe (Leigh), J Cunningham (Coventry South), C Curtis-Thames (Crosby), A Darling (Edinburgh Central), K Darvill (Uppminster), V Davey (Bristol West), I Davidson (Glasgow Pollok), D Davies (Llanelli), G Davies (Croydon Central), R Davies (Caerphilly), T Davis (Birmingham Hodge Hill), H Dawson (Lancaster and Wyre), J Dean (Burton), J Denham (Southampton Itchen), A Dismore (Hendon), J Dobbin (Heywood and Middleton), B Donohoe (Cunningham S), J Dowd (Lewisham W).

D Drew (Stroud), J Drown (Swindon S), A Eagle (Wallasey), M Eagle (Liverpool Garston), H Edwards (Monmouth), C Eford (Eltham), L Elmes (Liverpool Riverside), J Emms (Barnsley E and Mexborough), W Etherington (Sunderland N), D Fatchett (Leeds Central), M Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent Central), J Fitzpatrick (Poplar and Canning Town), L Fitzsimons (Rochdale), C Flint (Don Valley), P Flynn (Newport W), B Follett (Stevenage), D Foster (Bishop Auckland), M Foster (Hastings and Rye), M Foster (Worcester), G Foulkes (Canterbury), M Galloway (Glasgow Kelvin), M Gapes (Ilford S), B Gardner (Brent N), N Gerrard (Welthamston), I Gibson (Norwich N), L Gilroy (Plymouth Sutton), N Godman (Greenock and Inverclyde), R Goddard (Birmingham Sparkbrook and Small Heath), P Goggins (Wythenshawe and Sale E), E Gordon (Romford), B Grant (Tottenham), J Griffiths (Reading E), W Griffiths (Bridgend), B Groot (Telford), J Grogan (Selby), J Gunnell (Morley and Rothwell), P Hall (Neath), M Hall (Weaver Vale), P Hall (Bedford), F Hamilton (Leeds NE), D Hanson (Delyn), H Harman (Camberwell and Peckham), S Heal (Halesowen and Rowley Regis), J Healey (Wentworth), D Henderson (Newcastle upon Tyne N), J Henderson (Harrow), S Hepburn (Jarrow), J Heppell (Nottingham E), S Hestford (Wirral W), P Hewitt (Leicester W), K Hill (Stratford), D Hinchliffe (Wakefield), M Hodge (Barking), J Home Robertson (East Lothian), J Hood (Gylesdale), G Hoon (Ashfield), P Hope (Corby), K Hopkins (Luton N), A Howarth (Newport E), G Howarth (Knowsley N and Sefton E), K Howells (Pontypridd), L Hoyle (Chorley), B Hughes (Stretford and Urmston), K Hughes (Doncaster N), J Humble (Blackpool N and Fleetwood), A Hurst (Baintree), J Hutton (Barrow and Furness), H Iddon (Bolton SE), E Illsley (Barnsley Central), G Jackson (Hampstead and Highgate), H Jackson (Sheffield Hillsborough), D Jackson (Plymouth Devonport), B Jenkins (Tarnworth), A Johnson (Hull W and Hessle), M Johnson (Weymouth), B Jones (Alyn and Deeside), F Jones (Newark), H Jones (Warrington N), J Jones (Wolverhampton SW), J Owen Jones (Cardiff Central), L Jones (Birmingham Selly Oak), M Jones (Chyd S), T Jones (Dulwich and West Norwood), G Kaufman (Manchester Gorton), S Keeble (Northampton N), A Keen (Brentford and Isleworth), R Kelly (Bolton W), F Kemp (Houghton and Washington E), J Kennedy (Liverpool Wavertree), P Khambra (Ealing Southall), D Kidney (Stafford), A King (Rugby and Kenilworth), O King (Bethnal Green and Bow), T Kingston (Gloucester), A Kinner (Middlesbrough S and Cleveland E), S Ladyman (Thanet S), J Lawrence (Preseli Pembrokeshire), B Laxton (Derby N), D Lepper (Brighton Pavilion), C Leslie (Shepley),

T Levitt (High Peak), I Lewis (Bury S), T Lewis (Worsley), M Linton (Battersea), K Livingstone (Brent E), D Lock (Wyre Forest), A Love (Edmonton), J McAllion (Dundee E), T McAvoy (Glasgow Rutherglen), S McCabe (Birmingham Hall Green), C McCafferty (Calder Valley), I McCartney (Makerfield), S McDonagh (Milton and Morden), C Macdonald (Western Isles), J McDonnell (Hayes and Harrington), J McFall (Dumfries), A McGuire (Stirling), S Maclean (Cleithorpe), A Mackinlay (Thurrock), K MacNamee (Hull N), T McNulty (Harrow E), D MacShane (Rotherham), F MacTaggart (Slough), T McWalter (Hemel Hempstead), J McWilliam (Blyden), A Mahon (Halifax), J Malabar (Amber Valley), J Marek (Wrexham), G Marsden (Blackpool S), P Marsden (Shrewsbury and Atcham), J Marshall (Leicester S), J Marshall-Andrews (Medway), E Martlew (Carlisle), J Maxton (Glasgow Cathcart), M Meacher (Oldham W and Royton), A Meale (Mansfield), G Merron (Lincoln), A Michael (Cardiff S and Penarth), B Mitchell (Sheffield Heeley), A Milburn (Darlington), L Moffatt (Crawley), L Moonie (Kirkcaldy), M Moran (Luton S), J Morgan (Cardiff N), R Morgan (Cardiff W), E Morley (Sunderthorpe), E Morris (Birmingham Yardley), P Murphy (Torfaen), G Muddle (Leeds E), C Mullan (Sunderland S), D Murphy (Wansbeck), J Murphy (Eastwood), P Murphy (Torfaen), D Naysmith (Bristol NW), D Norris (Wansley), M O'Brien (Warrickshire N), W O'Brien (Normanton), E O'Hara (Knowsley S), B Oler (Nuneaton), M O'Neill (Ochil), D Organ (Forest of Dean), S Osborne (Ayr), N Palmer (Bromford), I Pearson (Dudley S), T Peardry (Stalybridge and Hyde), L Pearson (Ilford N), C Pickthall (Lancashire W), P Pike (Burnley), J Plaskitt (Warwick and Leamington), K Pollard (St Albans), C Pond (Gravesend), G Pope (Hyndburn), S Pound (Ealing N), S R Powell (Ogmore), B Prentice (Lewisham E), G Prentice (Pondle), D Primarolo (Bristol S), G Prosser (Dover), J Quin (Gateshead E and Washington W), L Quinn (Scarborough and Whitby), G Radice (Durham N), B Rammell (Harrow), S Rapson (Portsmouth N), N Raynsford (Greenwich and Woolwich), A Reed (Loughborough), G Robertson (Harrow), G Robinson (Coventry NW), B Royle (Hornsey and Wood Green), A Rogers (Bradford N), E Ross (Birmingham Perry Barr), T Rooney (Bradford N), F Roy (Motherwell and Wishaw), G Ruse (Vale of Gwyd), J Raddock (Lewisham Deptford), C Russell (City of Chester), J Ryan (Enfield N), M Saiter (Reading W), M Sarwar (Glasgow Govan), M Savidge (Aberdeen N), P Sawford (Kettering), B Sedgemoor (Hackney S and Shoreditch), J Shaw (Chatham and Aylesford), B Sheerman (Huddersfield), R Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyme), D Shipley (Stourbridge), A Simpson (Nottingham S),

M Singh (Bradford W), D Skinner (Bolsover), A Smith (Basildon), C Smith (Islington S and Finsbury), G Smith (Morecambe and Lunesdale), J Smith (Redditch), J Smith (Vale of Glamorgan), L Smith (Blaensau Gwent), C Soley (Ealing Acton and Shepherd's Bush), H Southworth (Warrington S), J Speller (Warley), R Squire (Dunfermline W), P Starkey (Milton Keynes SW), G Steinberg (City of Durham), S Stevenson (Stoke-on-Trent S), D Stewart (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber), I Stewart (Eccles), P Stinchcombe (Wellingborough), H Steele (Dartford), R Stott (Wigan), G Strong (Edinburgh E and Musselburgh), G Strong (Manchester Blackley), G Stuart (Birmingham Edgbaston), G Sutcliffe (Bradford S), A Taylor (Dewsbury), D Taylor (Stockton S), D Taylor (Leicestershire NW), G Thomas (Harrow W), G Thomas (Clwyd W), S Timms (East Ham), P Tipping (Sherwood), M Todd (Derbyshire S), D Toubing (Islwyn), J Trickett (Hemsworth), P Truswell (Pudsey), D Turner (Brighton Kempston), D Turner (Wolverhampton NE), G Turner (Norfolk NW), D Twigg (Hendon), S Twigg (Enfield Southgate), K Vaz (Leicester E), R Vis (Finchley and Golders Green), J Wallley (Stoke-on-Trent N), C Ward (Watford), R Wareing (Liverpool West Derby), D Watts (St Helens N), B White (Milton Keynes NE), A Whitehead (Southampton Test), M Wicks (Croydon N), A Williams (Swansea W), A Williams (Carmarthen E and Dinevir), A Williams (Conwy), M Wills (Swindon N), D Winnick (Walsall N), A Wise (Preston), M Wood (Bates and Spen), P Woolas (Oldham East and Saddleworth), J Wray (Glasgow Baillieston), T Wright (Cannock Chase), T Wright (Great Yarmouth), D Wyatt (Sittingbourne and Sheppey).

CONSERVATIVE: D Ames (Southend W), D Atkinson (Bournemouth E), S Day (Chesham), R Gale (Thanet N), J Randall (Uxbridge), S R Taylor (Rochford and Southend E), A Wildecombe (Maidstone and The Weald), J Taylor (Solihull).

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: R Allan (Sheffield Hallam), N Baker (Lewes), J Ballard (Taunton), T Brake (Carshalton and Wallington), P Barrow (Sutton and Cheam), V Cable (Twickenham), D Chidgey (Eastleigh), B Cotter (Weston-super-Mare), E Davey (Kingston and Surbiton), R Fearn (Southport), D Foster (Bath), A George (St Ives), G Gorrie (Edinburgh W), M Hancock (Portsmouth S), E Harris (Oxford and Abingdon), S Hughes (Southwark N and Bermondsey), N Jones (Chesham), C Kennedy (Ross, Siye and Inverness W), R Macdonald (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross), D Rendel (Newbury), C Russell (City of Chester), A Sanders (Torbay), A Shmell (Hazel Grove), M Taylor (Truro and St Austell), J Tange (Richmond Park), S Webb (Northavon), P Wills (Harrogate and Knaresborough).

MINOR PARTIES: A Morgan (SNP Galloway and Upper Nithsdale), A Salmon (SNP Banff and Buchan), J Swinney (SNP Tayside N), A Welsh (SNP Angus).

Last Friday, Parliament acted to end over 200 years of cruelty by voting in favour of Michael Foster's Private Member's Bill to ban hunting with dogs. We thank the 411 MPs above for listening to the 73% of the population in favour of a ban (MORI). The people have spoken. Parliament has spoken. Now let's complete the democratic process and make it law.



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Cambridge high-fliers sink to quiz show low

John O'Leary on
a University
Challenge team
who managed
to amass the
least points ever

CAMBRIDGE University acquired an unwanted addition to its list of academic distinctions last night when a team of undergraduates from New Hall recorded the lowest score on University Challenge.

The all-woman foursome answered only nine questions correctly in half an hour, and at one stage registered a record-breaking low of minus 15 points after being penalised for ill-judged interruptions. Their final score of 35 points was five fewer than Birkbeck College, London, managed in the last series.

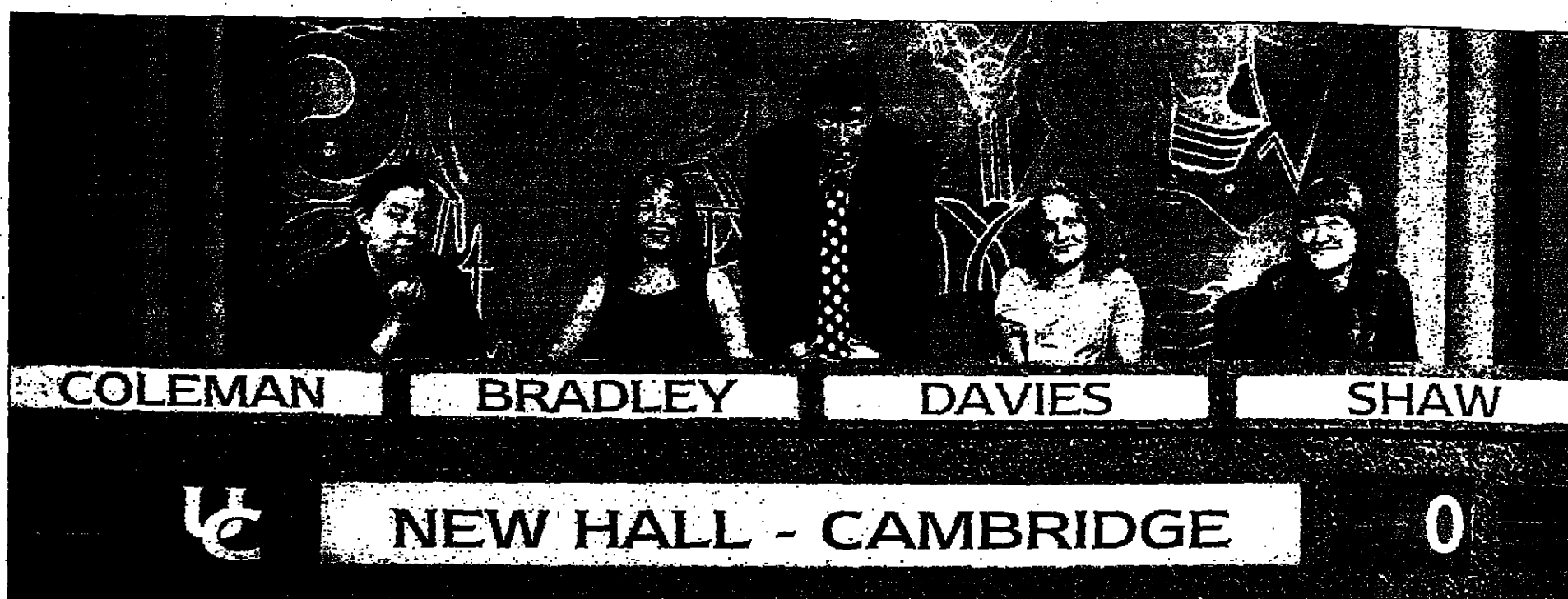
Jeremy Paxman, the question master, introduced the two teams with the promise: "More reassurance that the taxpayers' money isn't being wasted on higher education — we hope." New Hall hit trouble from the outset as their opponents from Nottingham University answered every question to amass a 75-point lead.

When the Cambridge team finally buzzed on the question, "Whose autobiography is entitled *Goodness had nothing to do with it*?" they forgot it was Mae West and slipped to minus five. Although they notched up minus ten shortly afterwards, Mr Paxman reassured them: "There's still time, New Hall."

Worse was to follow, however, before New Hall got off the mark to a loud cheer. Asked which politician entered Parliament as a Tory before being returned as a Labour MP in 1926, and then joined the British Union of Fascists, New Hall replied: "Winston Churchill" instead of Sir Oswald Mosley.

Relief came with the right answer to the question: "Which former ice dancer choreographed *Encounters*, which is based on six-Paul Simon songs?" It was Christopher Dean.

At the halfway point, New



Jeremy Paxman with the team whose "terrible score", he said kindly, might have been down to bad luck: Rachel Coleman, Abigail Bradley, Sarah Davies and Rosie Shaw

Hall had staged a recovery of sorts with a score of zero, while Nottingham were nearing 200 points. With the end of their ordeal in sight, Mr Paxman pleaded: "Two minutes to go to salvage some honour."

The Cambridge team buzzed on the question: Which house was purchased as a 21st birthday present for the future Edward VII in 1861? To loud cheers they correctly answered: "Sandringham".

The contest ended 335 points to 35, the lowest in the programme's 27-year history, although they avoided the biggest defeat. That remains the 415 to 65 drubbing of London's Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School by the Open University earlier this year.

As the show finished, Mr

Paxman told the New Hall team: "I want to be kind to you but it really was a terrible score. I think it's the worst score since University Challenge began — in fact I'm sure it is. You were maybe unlucky."

Sarah Davies, the 21-year-

old experimental psychology student who captained New Hall, said later: "We were obviously very disappointed at the result and afterwards in true student fashion we got well and truly drunk. We could only put our performance on the show down to a

case of stage fright. Perhaps the pressure just got to us."

The rest of the team comprised Rachel Coleman, a natural sciences undergraduate, Abigail Bradley, who is reading chemical engineering, and Rosie Shaw, a philosophy student. New Hall, which has

350 students, is one of two women-only colleges in Cambridge. Anne Lonsdale, New Hall president, said: "Losing on University Challenge is no reflection of the academic abilities of these students. The fact is they have gone on the show and good for them. She added:

"They must have had a run of bad luck."

Cambridge is preparing to mark a breakthrough for women in higher education. Fifty years ago this week the university ordinances were changed to allow women to receive full BA degrees.

WHERE NEW HALL WENT WRONG

1 Which two initials encompass the use of non-discriminatory expression, an adviser to the monarch, an electronic device for storing data and a law enforcement officer?
New Hall: QT (correct answer: PQ)

2 Anything for a Quiet Life was the title of a play by which English dramatist, written around 1620 and thought by some to be a collaboration with John Webster?
New Hall: Ben Jonson (Thomas Middleton)

3 Which politician entered Parliament as a Tory before being returned as a Labour MP in 1926 and then joining the British Union of Fascists?
New Hall: Winston Churchill (Sir Oswald Mosley)

4 Which two-word popular name is affectionately applied to the flag of the USA?
New Hall: Uncle Sam (Old Glory)

5 Which gemstones are found in deposits described as alluvial gravels, glacial till and kimberlite pipes, but only in the latter, such as those near Kimberley in South Africa, are they found in the rock matrix in which they were formed?
New Hall: quartz (diamonds)

Lessons from life

A NAIVE Oxford undergraduate earned a double first from the University of Life when he was fleeced by two women in Soho.

Peter Grieves-Smith, for the prosecution, told Southwark Crown Court that the student, who the judge ordered could not be named to spare him further embarrassment, was approached by a woman in March and "told £20 was required for sex and £180 as a

deposit, and to wait in a pub. After realising he had been stung, he left and met Jo Clarke, 28, and explained his predicament.

She offered to take him to offices where he could look at the books and point out the woman — if he paid £180 and waited in the same pub.

Clarke, who admitted obtaining £180 by deception, was conditionally discharged and ordered to repay the £180.



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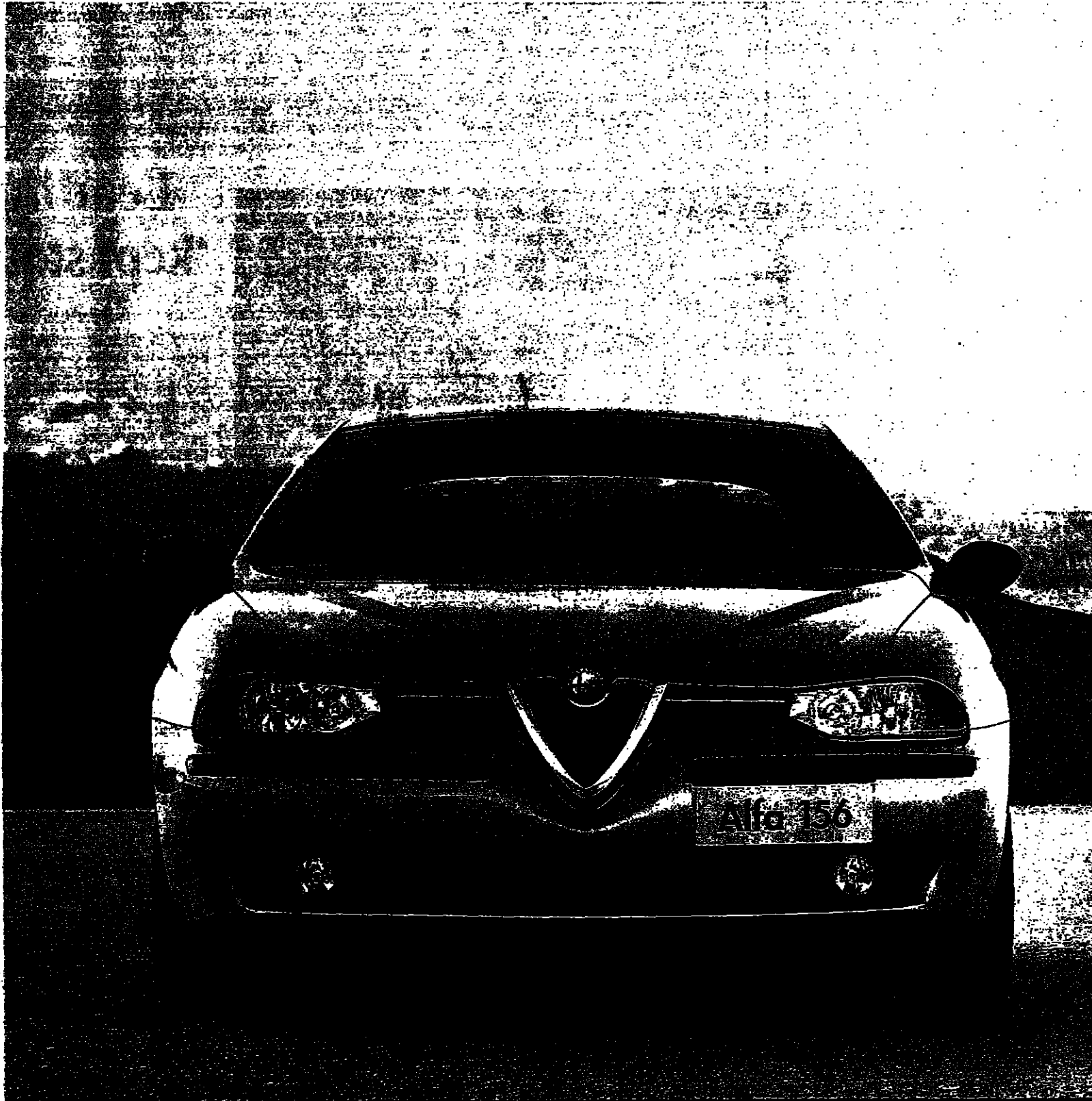
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Swiss deny owing billions in Nazi gold

London conference sees a clash with World Jewish Congress, write

Michael Binyon and Adrian Lee

SWITZERLAND clashed with Jewish leaders yesterday over claims that it still owes billions of dollars in gold stolen by Nazi Germany.

On the opening day of the three-day conference on Nazi gold, which has brought delegations from more than 40 countries to London, Thomas Borer, the chief Swiss delegate, said that such demands would jeopardise Switzerland's attempt to compensate Nazi victims and wreck attempts to work out a fair solution to the gold question. The conference is investigating what happened to an estimated \$650 million of gold looted by the Nazis which was handled by Swiss banks. It is trying to establish how to compensate survivors of the Holocaust and descendants of the victims.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, proposed at the opening of the conference that the 15 claimant countries should donate the money they will receive from the Tripartite Gold Commission to an account Britain has opened at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York for victims of the Holocaust. He said Britain, as a gesture of goodwill, was giving £1 million. Stuart Eizenstat, the American Under-Secretary heading the US delegation, announced a \$4 million contribution (£2.4 million) and a further \$25 million over three years.

Mr Borer said he could not

understand a claim yesterday by Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, that Switzerland still owed up to \$3 billion. He remarked tartly that the conference "is not about money but justice".

Mr Borer said: "We have taken actions that no other country has taken. The media can see which country is dragging its feet and which is taking the lead. We are not afraid of the truth, not afraid of our history. We have already set up a fund."

Mr Borer also flatly rejected any proposal to reopen the 1946 Washington agreement which settled Allied claims against Switzerland over its wartime gold trade. He derided calls by Senator Alfonse D'Amato, the New York senator, for greater Swiss payments, asking what would happen if every agreement going back to the Napoleonic Wars were to be renegotiated.

The confrontation was the first in a day of historical recollection and attempts to clarify the fate of looted gold. Mr Cook said the delegates "are here to look for compensation for a suffering that can never be expiated". The aim was to get at the truth and set the record straight. "We owe a duty to the living who survived the Holocaust and the Nazi persecution," Mr Cook said in a radio interview.

British officials said that



Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, and other delegates at the London conference on the fate of gold looted by the Nazis

several of the claimant countries had already promised to turn over some of their gold to the proposed fund. Yesterday Argentina and Luxembourg announced that they would contribute to the fund.

France insisted that it would make its own recompense to Holocaust victims. When it receives from Belgium and

Luxembourg some 2.2 tonnes of gold that France handed over after the war, the French Government will use the money for its own aid fund. France said this was fully in keeping with the Anglo-American proposal but a final decision would wait until the Matteoli report, currently looking at all looted assets,

finishes its work in the next few months.

The three-day conference, the brainchild of Lord Janner of Braunstone, chairman of the Holocaust Educational Trust, will examine the historical data and archives on the gold transactions. The entire record will be published within three months. The 240

delegates and observers are paying their own expenses and the conference in Lancaster House will cost little to the British taxpayer.

Under the chairmanship of Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the delegates, including representatives of five Jewish and one Romani groups spent the morning looking at where the

looted gold came from and what happened to it.

Several neutral countries that also traded with Germany, including Spain and Sweden, said they were doing everything to unearth their war time records.

Germany said it would spare no effort to find any missing archives.

Forgotten Gypsies robbed of £80m by Nazis

By Adrian Lee

THE Nazis looted millions of pounds in gold from Gypsies, but they became the forgotten victims of the Holocaust, a Romany delegation is to tell the conference today.

Up to 500,000 Gypsies were killed by the Germans and their supporters during the war and robbed of their gold which at today's prices would be worth £80 million.

The two-man delegation led by an academic who acted as a secret intermediary between eastern and western Romany groups during the Cold War, will also point the finger at the Vatican.

Donald Kenrick, a Londoner and the son of a Polish Jew, will reveal new evidence about the gold of 28,000 Gypsies who were killed at a concentration camp in Jasenovac, now Croatia. Their gold, which would be worth more than £1 million today, was sent to the Nazis by the Ustaši, the Fascist party then running the country, it will be alleged. Catholic priests were in charge of the camp, Mr Kenrick claimed.

Another 20,000 Gypsies died at Auschwitz, he said, and their gold ended up in Swiss banks after being traded by the Nazis. Mr Kenrick said the Swiss had a moral duty to pay compensation. There was evidence that they refused to give up scores of Gypsies who ended up in concentration camps.

Mr Kenrick said: "I am here to make sure the Gypsies are not forgotten. Many were robbed of their possessions and shot on the spot on arrival at concentration camps. We would like that money back."

Gypsies, mistrustful of banks and constantly on the move across borders, sank their wealth into gold. The Romanies had their own word for the Holocaust - *Porrajmos* - and survivors had never been compensated. After the war they were portrayed as thieves and misfits.

Many were living their final years in poverty, he said. About 20 Gypsy survivors of the Holocaust and their families lived in Britain. Throughout Europe there were up to 100,000 elderly survivors.

Mr Kenrick, who holds a doctorate in the Romany language from London University, will address the conference on behalf of the International Romany Union, along with Lars Denner, a Gypsy from Poland who now lives in Sweden.

Leading banks 'kept stolen ingots'

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

TWO of Germany's leading banks kept almost a tonne of gold stolen by the Nazis, according to a Holocaust researcher who has been trawling through recently unearthed records of the wartime Reichsbank.

Both Deutsche and Dresdner banks said yesterday they were surprised by the discovery and promised to follow up the leads contained in the microfilmed documents unearthed in Vienna by Hersch Fischer. Both banks deny that they have anything in common with their wartime counterparts. Dresdner Bank - once known as the SS Bank because of its close links with the Nazis - is said to have obtained 313 kilos of gold. A bank spokesman said the information would be passed on

to historians from the Hannah Arendt Institute in Dresden who were compiling a company history. "We have asked our historians to carry out the appropriate research. We have no interest in hushing anything up," Deutsche Bank allegedly received 650 kilos of tainted gold bars from the Reichsbank. The bank said: "We'll make every effort to clear this up."

German banks, together with heavy industry, contributed a great deal to Hitler's war effort. Most also profited, buying, for example, confiscated Jewish property at discounted prices. After the war the boards of the banks were denazified and the system was overhauled. The wartime history of the banks, however, remains very sensitive.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Father who shot sons gets 5 years

A former high-ranking officer in the Pakistani Army, who shot his adult sons at close range while in a deranged state, killing one and injuring the other, was jailed for five years at the Old Bailey.

Mushtaq Khan, 60, of Brighton, snapped and opened fire with his revolver because his sons, Sujad and Zia, ignored him as they watched television in June 1995. Sujad died but Zia survived. Khan's plea of manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility was accepted after the jury failed to reach a verdict on a murder charge.

Police reprimand

Four West Midlands police officers are to be disciplined after they put a man with a fractured skull in a cell overnight assuming he was drunk. John O'Reilly, 63, later died in hospital in Coventry. The Police Complaints Authority said the officers failed to follow guidelines.

Rescued by fax

A woman working in a pizza parlour in York, who was locked in alone after a raid by armed robbers who ripped out the telephone, escaped by faxing colleagues in another branch with the message: "Help. I've been robbed. I'm in the office. Please call the police and fax me back."

Double trouble

A West Yorkshire couple both received tickets for speeding - on the same stretch of road, in the same car and from the same policeman. The man told the officer he was rushing home because his wife needed the car for work. Five minutes later his wife was stopped; she said she was late.

Drivers warned to turn down all Christmas spirit

By Arthur Leathley, Transport Correspondent

THE Government prepared the way for tougher drink-drive laws yesterday when it launched a £2 million Christmas campaign that urges motorists to have no alcohol at all before driving.

The three-week advertising blitz to warn drivers that any drinking is irresponsible comes as ministers consider reducing the legal limit.

The slogan "Have none for the road" goes further than previous pre-Christmas campaigns, which have concentrated on the tragedies caused by drunk drivers. The new message is that any drinking increases the risk of having an accident that can cause death or serious injury.

Baroness Hayman, the Roads Minister, made clear the Government's hardening attitude to motorists taking to the road after drinking small amounts of alcohol. "They may think that they are not at risk but if they took one of our tests they would be shocked to find that their skills are impaired even after a small amount of alcohol."

The latest advertisement will show four drivers proclaiming that they are responsible by having only a small amount to drink before driving. A caption says, however, that the drivers are "responsible for killing, crippling, and maiming thousands in drink-drive accidents."

Police say that even after two units of alcohol such as a pint of beer or two glasses of wine drivers are less able to judge speed and distance and reaction is impaired. Young and middle-aged men are the worst offenders.

Ministers have already announced plans to consult on proposals to reduce the drink-

drive limit from 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood to 50 milligrams. A pint and a half of bitter or three small glasses of wine is commonly believed to be the limit at present - 50 milligrams would equal about a pint of bitter.

They are under pressure from Neil Kinnock, the European Union Transport Commissioner, to fall into line with countries such as France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece and Finland. Portugal has a limit of 40 milligrams and Sweden 20 milligrams.

Ministers insisted yesterday that the drink-drive campaign did not mean they had already made up their minds to reduce the limit but they admit frustration that the number of deaths in alcohol-related accidents has not fallen in recent years.

After a huge reduction following the introduction of drink-drive campaigns, the number of deaths has steadied at about 540 a year compared with a 1979 death toll of 1,043. Initial research suggests that up to 80 lives a year could be saved by reducing the limit.

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Campaign: poster urges motorists not to drink

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Spencers play out final act after £2 m deal

Earl faces questions from judge in Cape Town before divorce decree, Joanna Bale and Frances Gibb report

EARL SPENCER is almost certain to be forced to give evidence today to finalise the acrimonious divorce from his wife after he agreed a settlement estimated at £2 million.

The couple had hoped to keep today's final act of their eight-year marriage private, but the earl will be required to persuade a judge in the Cape Town High Court that the marriage is over. His lawyers are hopeful that there will be no attempt to question him about his marital infidelities, and that the bitter enmity of the past week can be forgotten.

It is believed that the couple reached a settlement partly because neither relished the

prospect of taking the witness stand during the hearing to determine whether their divorce should be heard in South Africa or England. The earl's lawyer, Leslie Weinkove, said: "The earl will testify in open court and the divorce documents will become public. There are no moves by us to keep it a secret, although the parties do not want to comment on the settlement."

As the rival teams of lawyers spent yesterday finalising the terms of the secret divorce deal, an estimated £2 million of the earl's money was transferred to Countess Spencer's bank account in London in

preparation for the formal confirmation of the divorce. Lawyers for the countess said they believed they had emerged the victors, although they agreed that she was relieved she would not have to face the ordeal of giving evidence about her alcoholism, eating disorders and marital difficulties.

Marilyn La Follette, the solicitor from the London law firm Charles Russell, who led the seven-strong legal team for Countess Spencer — four British lawyers, three South African — said her client had achieved "the biggest settlement ever" in South Africa for a divorcing wife.

She conceded that the settlement package is well below what might have been achieved in the English courts, where the countess could have won up to £3.7 million. A decisive factor was the massive publicity surrounding the case. "The whole thing has got to have been a nightmare for each of them. Both were also concerned about the children."

Today will not be the end of the legal wrangles for the earl. He faces a court claim in the new year from the husband of his former mistress, Chantal Collopy. Don Collopy, a wealthy South African bus-

DIVORCE DEAL THAT HAS COST MORE THAN MONEY

Earl Spencer is now depicted as a damaged family man and a social outcast who had as many as a dozen mistresses. The £2 million lump sum settlement is far greater than the £300,000 deal he originally offered his wife. He also faces a bill of £500,000 for his legal costs.

The additional cost will affect his plans to renovate Althorp in time for the July 4 opening for the public to view the resting place of his elder sister, Diana, Princess of Wales.

His self-appointed crusade to tame the behaviour of the tabloid press has been scuppered. His tainted reputation means he can no longer champion new laws to stop intrusion into his private life.

At least two of his former mistresses are ready to publish more revelations about their turbulent affairs and condemn his behaviour. His neighbours in Cape Town are scathing about his behaviour and warn that he will be a social pariah.

On the positive side, he has got back damning and embarrassing private correspondence and agreed a settlement before Althorp becomes one of Britain's most lucrative attractions.

She has also retained custody of the four children and friends and family say she can no longer be dominated by Earl Spencer.

However, she has settled for a fraction of what lawyers say she could have got in a British settlement and by withdrawing her allegations, her ex-husband can deny the claims of his many affairs.

THE SPENCER FORTUNE

Financial experts believe Lord Spencer can easily raise £2 million. He has a £100 million family estate, a £6 million personal fortune and £1 million a year income. Although he claimed in court that his money is tied up in trusts and offshore accounts, one source said: "You can always loosen the strings. He can easily borrow £2 million on his various assets and easily afford the interest payments." Documents presented in court show he has liquid assets of almost £2 million, including £420,000 in bank accounts and £1,141,000 in stocks and shares. Solid assets, including Althorp Park and a box at the Albert Hall worth £275,000, add up to £4.486 million. The total Spencer family fortune is put at £98 million, including Spencer House in Central London, thousands of acres of farmland, paintings and antiques. Plans for increasing visitors to Althorp will boost his income.

nessman, is suing him for £22,000 damages for the "alienation of the affection" of his wife. He claims he and his wife divorced because of her affair with the earl. Mr Collopy's solicitor, Andrew McPherson, said: "This action is still pending."

One of the countess's priorities will be to buy a house in London as a base for herself in Britain, although she and her husband are not expected to

leave their respective homes in Cape Town permanently until their children are older.

The couple agreed the divorce settlement after 11 hours of secret negotiations that finished at midnight on Monday. It is thought that the prospect of having to denounce each other publicly and then be cross-examined persuaded them to hammer out the deal. Shelley Anne Claircourt, the earl's spokes-

woman, said he had called a halt to the proceedings for the sake of his wife and children, despite his keenness to clear his name in the witness box. She said: "He did not want to see Victoria humiliated in court."

As part of the agreement, both sides have withdrawn damaging allegations made against each other in witness statements. They have also agreed to continue to share

custody of the children, Lady Kitty, six, twins Lady Eliza and Lady Katya, five, and three-year-old Louis, Viscount Althorp. They live with their mother during the week and with their father at weekends.

The earl will continue paying their expenses, including food, clothing, nanny and school fees. Also included in the countess's settlement is her five-bedroomed bungalow with swimming pool in the

Constantia suburb of Cape Town, her four-wheel drive car and private medical insurance.

She is expected to spend up to £1 million on a house in London and invest the rest of her settlement to provide an income for life. Despite the bitterness of last week, the couple now say they want to "rebuild a civilised and friendly arrangement" for the sake of their children.

Mandelson casts himself as saviour of Millennium dome



Mandelson: "happier"

By NICHOLAS WATT
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PETER MANDELSON cast himself as the saviour of the Millennium dome yesterday when he admitted that ministers almost scrapped the scheme after inheriting ill-thought-out ideas from the Conservatives.

In his first appearance before a Commons committee, Mr Mandelson said he was horrified when he discovered after the election that the organisers of the dome had a "blank sheet" of ideas to celebrate the

millennium. Asked by one MP whether he nearly abandoned the dome altogether, the Minister without Portfolio said: "The consideration was very serious indeed. The reason was that, while we very firmly supported the concept, we were worried about the management of the company."

However, Mr Mandelson rode to the rescue of the dome over the summer, after a rigorous review by the Government, because he said that Britain would never be forgiven if it failed to mark the millennium at the meridian. He told the committee

that he felt completely vindicated because the dome would be a "unique and inspiring opportunity" to educate and entertain 12 million visitors a year.

He added: "It's not a tacky theme park nor a one-year white elephant. It's a chance for people to think about their society, and hopefully improve it." Mr Mandelson offered the committee a glimpse of the dome's attractions. The most exciting entertainment would be an interactive computer game called "surfball", which he described as the sport of the 21st century, and a

15-minute rollercoaster ride. Mr Mandelson said: "It is going to be absolutely dramatic, fantastic. I am thrilled by the progress and that is why I am a happier Minister without a Portfolio than I was six months ago."

Mr Mandelson brushed aside a suggestion from Michael Fabricant, the Conservative MP for Lichfield, that Labour had opposed the dome in Opposition by quoting from a letter by Jack Cunningham that the party supported the project.

The minister joked with Claire Ward, the Labour MP for Watford,

when she asked him whether it would be like the Futuroscope exhibition in France, which he visited last week. Mr Mandelson said: "No, I am sorry I didn't take you. Had I known I would have taken you on the train to Poitiers."

Bob Marshall-Andrews, the new MP for Medway who was named as the Member to Watch at last week's *Spectator* Parliamentary awards for his relentless questioning of Mr Mandelson, said afterwards Mr Mandelson's refusal to publish interim accounts until next September could lead to a "disaster".

Mr Mandelson said he hoped the dome would last for at least as long as the Royal Festival Hall, which is still standing 46 years after the 1951 Festival of Britain, organised by his grandfather, Herbert Morrison. Mr Mandelson gave the impression his passion for the dome is partly inspired by an injustice which his grandfather suffered.

He told the committee: "Herbert Morrison left office in October 1951. The first act of the succeeding administration was to tear down most of the vestiges of the exhibition. That was a shame."

Soldier crippled in fall seeks damages

By ADAM FRESKO

A FORMER paratrooper, who was left a paraplegic after falling from an assault course scramble net, began a claim for compensation from the Ministry of Defence yesterday.

Simon Barnes was 21 when he took two friends to look at the Parachute Regiment's state-of-the-art "Trainezium" combat training apparatus at its Aldershot HQ on May 13, 1984, the High Court heard.

As he leapt on to a vertical scramble net which was not secured either at its sides or bottom, it "blowed like a curtain in the breeze". He lost his grip and fell 15ft to the ground, suffering spinal injuries which left him disabled.

Mr Barnes, then a territorial private in 10th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, was off duty at the time.

Jonathan Marks, QC, for Mr Barnes, 34, said that "the accident was caused by the MoD's negligence in allowing the Trainezium to be kept unattended in a place to which the public had access in an unsafe condition."

Mr Barnes, of north London but originally from Malvern, Hereford and Worcester, is claiming substantial damages. The MoD denies liability.

The hearing continues.

Couple sue GP over failure of vasectomy

By RICHARD DUCE

THE marriage of a father of three broke down after a failed vasectomy led to the birth of unwanted twins, the High Court was told yesterday.

The family lives of Andrew and Louise Fulleylove were wrecked by the unexpected arrival of a new son and daughter after the couple had decided not to have any more children. They are seeking damages for the cost of bringing up the twins.

The couple had planned on buying a new home with Mrs Fulleylove considering a return to work. But the pressure of coping with five children caused the marriage to collapse and the couple now live apart, the court was told.

Mr and Mrs Fulleylove, of Stevenage, Hertfordshire, are suing Michael Duggan, who carried out the £72 vasectomy. They claim he failed to warn them the operation could reverse itself. Dr Duggan denies negligence.

The court heard how Mr Fulleylove, 36, had a vasectomy in 1991 but the couple's sex life was ruined because his wife no longer felt safe. The couple separated in 1994.

They are suing for the estimated £150,000 cost of bringing up the twins, Nathan and Jessica, now 5, until their

maturity. Further damages are also being sought for the "anxiety and distress" caused to the couple. Mr Fulleylove has given up work as a bakery hygiene inspector to look after the twins and other children aged 11 and eight. The eldest child, 16, lives with Mrs Fulleylove, 33.

Mr Fulleylove told the court he had the vasectomy after being referred to Dr Duggan, a local GP, by a family planning clinic. "He stressed to us that it was a non-reversible operation and we had to be sure that we didn't want anymore children."

Mr Fulleylove said he was never shown explanatory diagrams of how the operation would be performed. In September that year Dr Duggan analysed a sperm sample and gave Mr Fulleylove the "all-clear" but Mr Duggan said a second test should have been made in November which would have revealed his patient was fertile once more.

Christopher Goddard, for the couple, said that the chances of a late reversal were one in 3,000 to 4,000. Had the couple been aware of that risk they would have taken further contraceptive measures until they were satisfied Mr Fulleylove was sterile.

The hearing continues.

Historic lighthouse to be saved from sea

By ADAM FRESKO

AN HISTORIC lighthouse is being lifted and pushed back 50ft from a cliff edge in a £200,000 plan to stop it falling into the sea.

The 165-year-old Belle Tout, said to be the only occupied lighthouse in the country, stands on Beachy Head near Eastbourne and boasts five Channel views. Architects plan to have the 45ft building raised and then pushed away from the danger of coastal erosion. When built it was 100ft from the edge.

The floor will be dug up and reinforced beams will replace the foundations. Hydraulic jacks will then raise it 2ft and keep the 600-tonne structure on an even keel, once it has been placed on another set of beams called slide tracks.

The operation will take about six days but Mark Roberts and his wife, Louise, who live in the lighthouse, have been told their possessions can stay inside. The couple hope a Heritage Grant will help to pay for the move.

Belle Tout was last used as a lighthouse nearly 100 years ago. It was bought in the 1920s by the neurologist and author Sir James Purves-Stewart, who entertained George V and Queen Mary there. It is now owned by Eastbourne council, which had it restored in 1955.

Astronomers see black hole explode

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A HUGE explosion from a black hole in our own galaxy has been captured by radio astronomers at Jodrell Bank as it happened. The images show two streams of blobs of ultra-hot gas rocketing outwards from the black hole at velocities of more than 90 per cent of the speed of light.

The black hole lies more than 40,000 light years away on the other side of the Milky Way, in the constellation of Aquila the Eagle. Known only by its catalogue name, GRS1915, the object was discovered by an X-ray telescope on a Russian satellite in 1992. Rob

Fender, a British astronomer working at the University of Amsterdam, said: "GRS1915 is believed to consist of a black hole several times more massive than the Sun, in orbit with a normal star. Matter is heated to intense temperatures and radiates X-rays as it spirals in towards the black hole."

"Most of it is sucked in and lost forever. The process is so violent that unpredictable explosions occur, producing these spectacular jets."

On October 29, astronomers were alerted by the Ryle radio telescope at Cambridge that GRS1915 had flared.

The only way to see in detail was to use the Multi-Element Radio Interferometer Network — six radio telescopes across England — connected to give the effect of a single dish 135 miles in diameter.

"Since GRS1915 is so far away from us, we need an instrument with a resolution even better than the Hubble space telescope, but at radio wavelengths," Ralph Spencer, from Jodrell Bank in Cheshire said. The results will help researchers to understand what is happening in the most energetic objects in the galaxy.



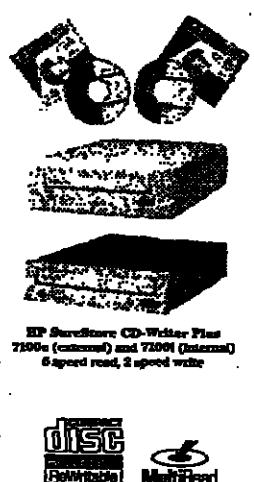
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Moscow to free drugs teenager next month

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

A RUSSIAN court yesterday found a British student guilty of drug trafficking, but said that she would be freed next month after spending nearly two years in jail.

Karen Henderson, 19, wept with relief behind the cage of the courtroom in Moscow as Justice Natalia Arinkina imposed the sentence of 23 months. She was found guilty of smuggling and possessing 10lb of cocaine, allegedly found in her suitcase at Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow in

February 1996. The three-judge panel said it had taken account of her age, good behaviour, and that she had no criminal record. Her mother, Patricia, cried with joy: "I am lost for words," she said, thanking those who had fought for her daughter's release.

In the Russian legal system, acquittals are extremely rare and such a light sentence for drugs trafficking practically unheard of. A woman who admitted smuggling cocaine from Havana on the same flight is serving a six-year sentence at a labour camp.

However, the British teenager, who was brought up in Holland, maintained her innocence throughout the 22 months she spent in Moscow's notorious remand prisons. "Never in my knowledge did I carry any narcotics," she said in her final statement to the court. The prosecution had failed to produce any key witnesses, nor did it present vital evidence such as the false-bottomed suitcase and the cocaine.

The Russian authorities had come under pressure from British officials to improve the legal procedures, and the British press and public demanding a fairer trial. Tony Blair raised the case when he visited Moscow in October.

Henderson's lawyers are to appeal in an attempt to have her home by Christmas.



Karen Henderson as the verdict was read out



Patricia Henderson beaming as she leaves court

City churches reborn as 'spiritual trailblazers'

Ruth Gledhill on a renaissance for the Square Mile's places of worship

PLANS to close two thirds of the City of London's churches have been abandoned, it was disclosed yesterday. Instead, the Anglican churches in the Square Mile are to be redeveloped into "spiritual trailblazers", becoming centres of peace, church history, religious education, healing and meditation.

In one church, a community of Franciscan monks is to be invited back to the City for the first time since the Reformation to run a retreat house and religious centre where workers suffering stress can go for spiritual relaxation. Others might become centres for theatre and music, public lectures, tourism and exhibitions. But all 39 churches will remain consecrated for regular worship.

While some are effectively closed, opening just once a week for visitors, the opening hours of all are to be increased to enable the millions of workers who commute daily to the City to find spiritual sustenance just a few minutes' walk from their offices.

The initial target, drawn up by the newly formed City Churches Development Group, is to have all the buildings open on a regular basis by summer 1999.

The proposals, published at St Katharine Cree in Leadenhall Street, represent a U-turn on the controversial recommendations of the

Templeman Commission of 1994. Church leaders in London had long believed that the City's 39 churches were surplus to the requirements of a resident population of a few thousand.

It was proposed to cut the number of active churches from 36 to 12, and parishes from 22 to four.

Although it was made clear that none would be demolished, the indications were that a conversion to secular use, such as a library, would be welcomed in some cases. There was, the commission said, no demand for 26 of the churches and they could become "reserve" churches. Some might be "locked up and merely maintained wind and water-tight", the report proposed.

But yesterday Canon Peter Delaney, Vicar of All Hallows by the Tower and newly installed as priest-in-charge of St Katharine's, where the City churches development group is to be based, said the Templeman proposals were no longer on the table.

He indicated that the commission's report had proved a catalyst in uniting the clergy and laity of the City churches in bringing about the latest, more positive proposals.

"A church that is persecuted grows strong," he said. "Templeman brought the churches together in a powerful new way. It has made us

think and given us a common purpose."

He said it had not yet been decided which church might host the religious community. But an ideal church would be St Sepulchre, Holborn, which has excellent acoustics and suitable living accommodation, but is without a vicar. Open once a week, it is being kept alive by a committed volunteer team of laity.

St Dunstan-in-the-East is attached to Canon Delaney's main church of All Hallows and already serves as a centre of healing, with reflexologists, counsellors and others practising there. But Canon Delaney believes another church needs to be set aside to redevelop the City's religious life, in the

monastic sense. "This church would have a residence out of which a small Anglican community, probably Franciscans, would work. They would follow the monastic hours of prayers, would offer counselling and would provide a still centre of quietness in the City."

A church spokesman said the Franciscans would "almost certainly" be the first religious community in the City since the Reformation. Most Anglican orders were established in the 19th century.

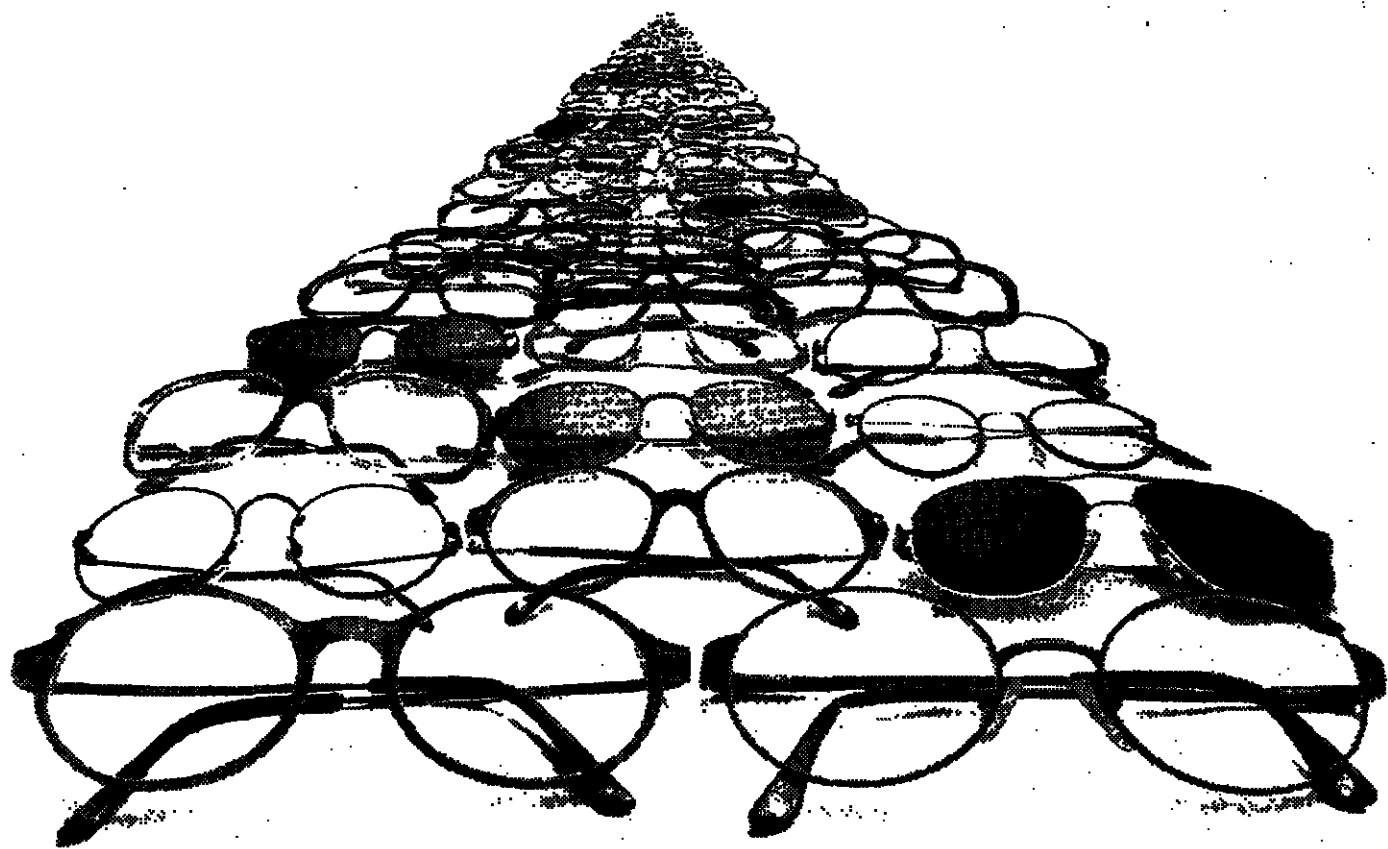
Canon Delaney said: "People here work under enormous stress. They make long journeys from their home and spend most of their time in the City. They need the City churches as places of tranquility and peace, and also places where they can get professional advice."

St Ethelburga's, the City's smallest medieval church, damaged by an IRA bomb, is being restored for conversion into an ecumenical centre for peace and reconciliation. "Sainsbury and Sainsbury" pilgrimage trails will be themed around historical figures such as Captain Cooke, William Penn and Samuel Pepys. Educational programmes will be developed around the national curriculum using churches such as St Bride's, Fleet Street, St James Garlickhyde and St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe.



All Hallows by the Tower, one of the City churches

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OPTICIANS

Coroner urges safety rethink after divers die

By STEPHEN FARRELL

A CORONER yesterday called on the world's largest diver-training organisation to change its procedures after the deaths of three inexperienced scuba divers in two months.

Glyn Beeson, Patrick Scanlon and Claude Man drowned soon after completing courses run by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI). They were all said to have panicked.

James Symington, the Leicestershire Coroner, made four recommendations. He said diver-training bodies should: carry out regular audits of instructors; provide training manuals; encourage newly qualified students to take further lessons; and all those taking courses should be required to provide medical certificates from GPs.

His comments followed criticism of the association by police and safety experts during inquests into the deaths at the Stoney Cove Diving Centre, near Hinckley, Leicestershire, the largest inland diving centre in Britain.

Mr Symington said he had listened carefully to police and Health and Safety Executive evidence that the cove was not to blame, and that panic and inexperience were a factor in each case. The recommendations will be forwarded to the Sports Council.

The inquest yesterday was

told how Mr Man, 28, from Tottenham, North London, drowned after diving to 35 metres — more than three times deeper than he had ever gone before — while swimming with a friend on October 19. After diving to the deepest part of the quarry, he "bolted" while ascending, knocked out his companion's breathing apparatus, and passed out.

Inspector Stephen Hanson, a Leicestershire police diving expert, said Mr Man, who had only completed six previous dives and was qualified to 18 metres only, panicked in the cold, dark water at 4.5 times normal atmospheric pressure.

He had "concerns" about Mr Man's training at the PADI-licensed Adventure Divers Centre, in Enfield, North London, in July this year. Two of his four qualifying dives had only been to three metres instead of the required five metres.

At earlier inquests the coroner heard that Mr Beeson, 48, from Cannock, Staffordshire, and Mr Scanlon, 37, from Leicester, both panicked and drowned after making similar safety mistakes. Like Mr Man they were PADI-trained but had dived deeper than advised on their courses. None of the three trained at Stoney Cove.

Mr Symington recorded verdicts of accidental death on all three men.

Soldier is jailed for Cyprus burglaries

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN LARNACA

A BRITISH soldier serving in Cyprus was sent to prison for six months yesterday after pleading guilty to a series of burglaries. Keith Hollywood, of the 1st Battalion, the King's Regiment, was caught when police traced a 42-minute phone call he had made to a friend in England from a restaurant he was burgling.

Hollywood, 23, admitted four burglaries in 80 days earlier this year. The court heard that his accomplice in the spate of thefts from pubs and restaurants, which mainly involved electrical goods worth a total of several thousand pounds, was absent without leave from the Army and had fled Cyprus.

The judge accepted that Hollywood had become a heavy drinker as a result of family problems but said the offence warranted a prison sentence, even though that meant an automatic discharge from the Army.

In the same court in Larnaca, two other privates from the same battalion were each fined £550 after they admitted causing more than £2,700 damage to a luxury hotel while drunk. The judge said he did not jail Carl Towns, from Liverpool, and Philip Hughes, from Manchester, both 19, because he did not want to ruin their army careers.

Both have been absent without leave since early October from the 800-strong battalion, which is currently on military exercises in Kuwait, and face disciplinary action from the Army.

Hollywood will serve his sentence in the island's only prison, in Nicosia, which holds three Royal Green Jackets who were sentenced to life for sexually assaulting and killing Louise Jensen, a Danish tour guide, three years ago.

Police attack training after divers' deaths

How The Times disclosed police fears in October

Pupils get a head start with shampoo remedy for asthma

By IAN MURRAY

FIVE schoolgirls won a £2,000 prize yesterday for research which shows that using anti-dandruff shampoo helps asthmatics to breathe more easily.

Their findings have prompted the National Heart and Lung Institute to recommend that asthmatics switch to anti-dandruff shampoo.

The girls, aged 12 and 13, belong to a lunchtime science club at Cavendish School in Eastbourne, East Sussex. They decided to carry out hairwashing tests after reading a report in

New Scientist from the paediatrics department of a Brazilian university. This showed that skin flakes on children's scalps gave refuge to dust mites that can trigger allergic responses and asthma attacks.

The team recruited 25 schoolmates with asthma-related problems. The children washed their hair with normal shampoo for two weeks and with the anti-dandruff shampoo for another two weeks. Each morning and evening they were tested with a peak-flow meter which monitors breathing capacity.

The team found that for

the period the children used the anti-dandruff shampoo, asthmatic symptoms were reduced as breathing capacity rose by 10 per cent.

Last year, the Health Matters award, presented by SmithKline Beecham, also went to a school researching asthma, which affects 7.5 per cent of children aged 5 to 15. Pupils from Stronsay Secondary School on Orkney had investigated the high incidence of the illness on the island.

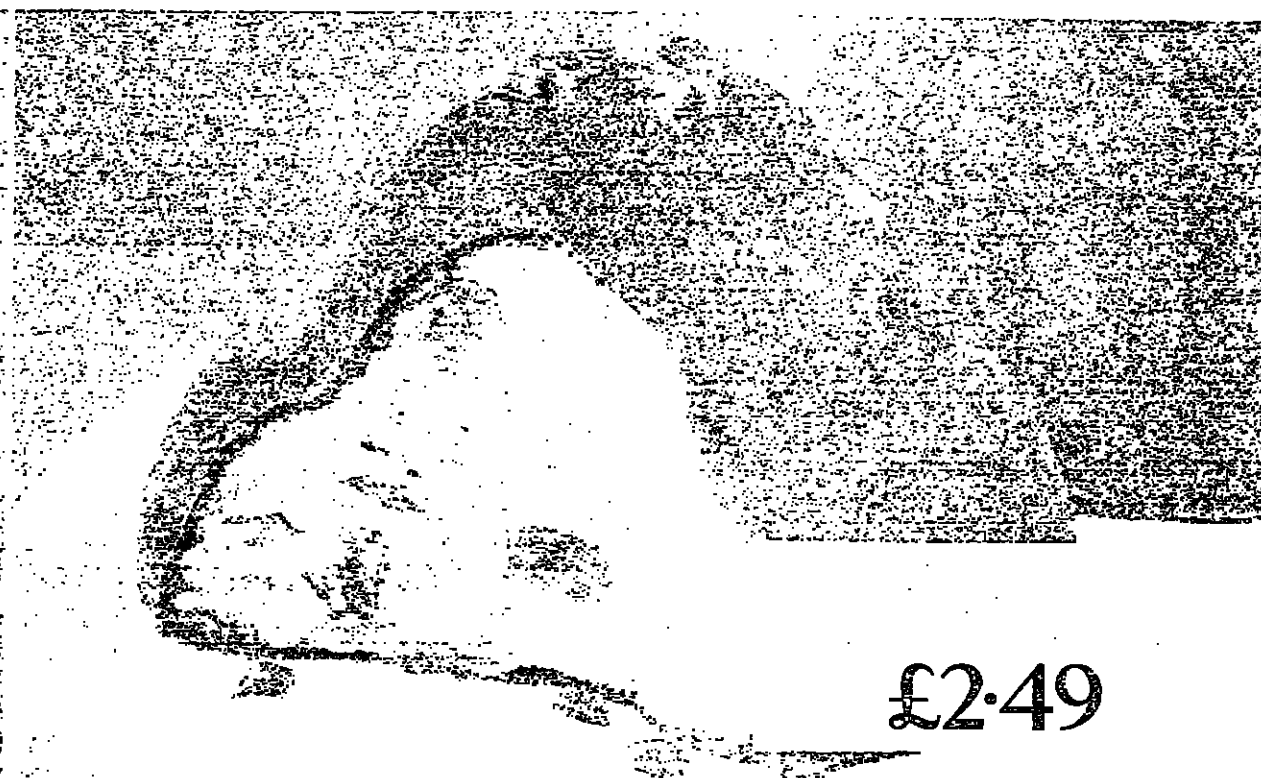
Apart from the £2,000 award for their school, the children have won £500 for Asthma Research, their chosen charity.

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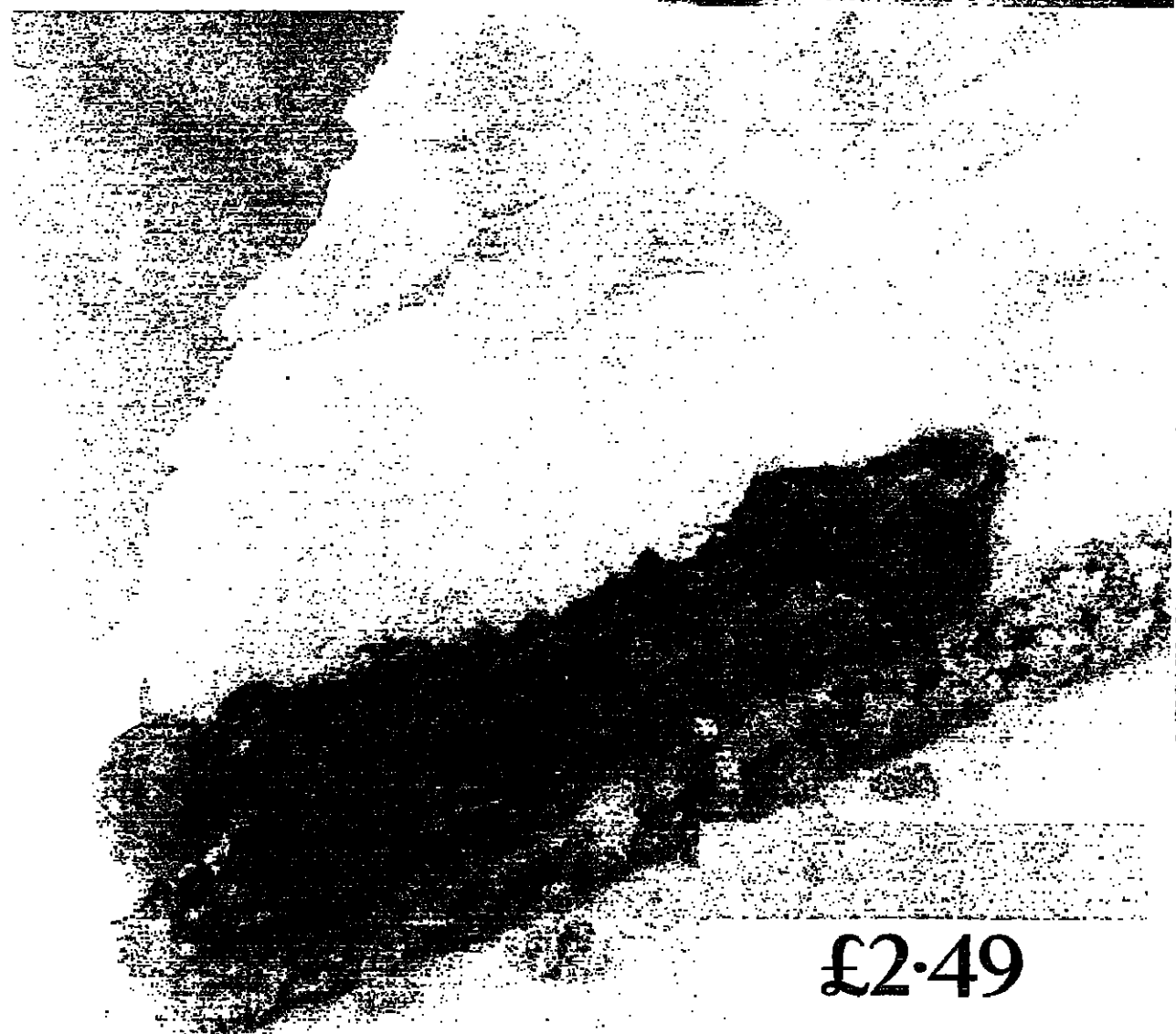
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Christmas at Sainsbury's

Saver's guide to replacement for Pep and Tessa

What is an ISA?

Everyone will be able to save a total of £5,000 a year in an ISA, up to a maximum contribution limit of £50,000 in the new account. All the income earned on the account and all capital gains will be free from tax. At the moment, individuals can save up to £9,000 a year in a Peps, plus a total of £9,000 over a five year period in a Tax Exempt Special Savings Account. ISAs will become available from April 1999. The £5,000 a year can be invested in a mixture of cash, stocks and shares, and life insurance products such as endowment savings contracts. By offering this product, the Government hopes to encourage the savings habit among the lower paid.

How will the ISA work?

ISAs will be offered by banks, building societies, life insurance companies, and investment management companies — in fact all the organisations that at present offer Peps and Tessas. The Government is also hoping to encourage organisations that have greater access to the low paid to offer ISAs, this would include supermarkets and credit unions. Savers will be able to take out one ISA a year. As with Peps

The Government announced its plans yesterday for tax-free individual savings accounts (ISAs), replacing tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) and personal equity plans (Peps). Caroline Merrell explains how the new scheme will work

they will be able to change ISA providers each year. They will be able to invest a maximum of £1,000 in cash or National Savings, and a maximum of £1,000 a year in a life insurance product. The other £3,000 must be invested in shares or unit trusts. Savers do have the option of putting the entire £5,000 in shares or other equity investments, but they cannot put the entire £5,000 in cash. They will be able to have access to their tax-free cash at any time.

What happens to existing Peps and Tessas?

About £8 billion is held in Peps and around £26 billion in Tessas. Around 2.5 million people have Peps and 4.5 million have Tessas. Investments held in Peps and Tessas will be able to be rolled over into the new ISAs, subject to a maximum limit of £50,000. The Government envisages

that savers will keep their existing products, but they will be simply held within a new ISA wrapper. Peps as an entry will cease to exist on April 5, 1999. The tax-free investments, however, will be able to be rolled over subject to the overall £50,000 limit. It will not be possible to open a new Tessa after April 5, 1999. Existing Tessas can be put into an ISA after that date again subject to the £50,000 limit.

What if a saver has more than £50,000 in an entire Pep and Tessa holding?

Any investments greater than £50,000 will become subject to both capital gains tax and income tax. The Government is allowing investors up until October 5, 1999, to transfer investments.

How does it affect Pep mortgages?

It has become commonplace



Supermarkets such as Tesco and Sainsbury's, which already offer banking services, will be the major beneficiaries of the new savings scheme

for Peps to be used to pay off loans. According to Halifax, the ISA could simply replace Pep as a method of paying off a mortgage. Those who have Pep mortgages will be able to roll over their Peps in to the ISA. The funds will continue to grow tax-free within the ISA. The Halifax claims that £50,000 invested in an ISA over 25 years, the usual mort-

gage term, will grow to £150,000, which is greater than most mortgages.

How will current investments be transferred?

The paper issued today by the Inland Revenue is for consultation purposes only. The details of transferring existing investments have yet to be worked out. The Government

does not want to see the industry imposing high charges for changing Peps and Tessas in to ISAs.

Who will lose and who will gain under the new ISA?

The biggest losers under the new savings plans will be those who have more than £50,000 sheltered in Peps and Tessas. They will have to find

a way of dealing with the excess before April 1999. As each individual is allowed a £50,000 limit, there may be an argument for transferring investments between husband and wife.

Bob Rothenberg from the accountants Blick Rothenberg said that changes could mean an extra £1,400 a year in tax for those with substantial Pep

savings. He said: "Say that a higher rate taxpayer has invested £70,000 in Peps. He transfers the £50,000 maximum into an ISA, leaving him with £20,000. If he invests this for a return of 5 per cent, this would give him £3,500 in income. The tax bill on this would be £1,400."

Leading article, page 21

Prescott makes way for council tax rises of up to 10%

Relaxed town hall spending rules will hit some households harder than others, reports Mark Henderson

COUNCIL tax bills could rise by as much as 10 per cent next year as capping rules are relaxed under local government spending plans announced yesterday.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, said in a Commons statement that total spending by local government in England would rise by 3.8 per cent to £48.2 billion, a 1 per cent rise in real terms, with an average council tax increase of just over 7 per cent. The average tax for a band D property will be £635, a rise of £42 on last year's average of £593. The rises were in line with Conservative predictions, he said.

Some areas, though, are likely to see significantly higher tax

hikes as a result of changes to capping procedures allowing many councils to set rates up to 3 per cent higher than permitted by the last Government.

The settlement opened a new chapter in relations between central and local government, Mr Prescott said. "Too often in the past decade, central government in Whitehall seemed to be waging war on local government in town halls. When new Labour was elected on May 1 we declared it was time to bury the hatchet."

Many Labour authorities will also gain from changes to the

calculation system for standard spending assessments (SSA), or the amount the Government feels councils need to provide an adequate level of service. New indicators of the social composition of an authority, such as the number of poorer pensioners or people claiming income support, are to be taken into account, handing more cash to deprived areas.

Labour-run metropolitan councils such as Barnsley, which were previously assessed on the same basis as suburban authorities such as Kingston upon Thames, will be the chief beneficiaries,

with Tory and Liberal Democrat councils losing out. Barnsley will get nearly £6 million more in 1998-99 because of the change, against a below-inflation increase of £2.4 million for Kingston.

Labour councils will also benefit from new rules on debt, which take into account repayments outstanding in 1990.

Sedgefield council in Durham, which includes Tony Blair's constituency, will be allowed to spend £1 million more than this year, an increase of 13 per cent, while William Hague's home council, Richmondshire, gets just

£200,000 extra, a 5 per cent rise.

The Conservatives' flagship London borough of Westminster will be one of the settlement's biggest losers because of a new system of calculating the extra costs incurred by councils who cater for large numbers of commuters and visitors.

Westminster's SSA is to be cut by £20 million, or more than 8 per cent, under the new system, which no longer assumes visitors are of the same social character as a council's residents, although a phasing-in grant will offset much of the impact next year. Council-

lors fear they may be forced to raise significantly their council tax rates, presently the lowest in Britain at an average of £209 for a band D property. The highest band D bills, at £1,009, are in Labour-run Liverpool.

Other London councils with many tourists and commuters, particularly the City of London but also Labour-run Camden, will suffer from the changes.

Education authorities will see the bulk of the extra money announced by Mr Prescott, with a total of £1.06 billion, including the £835 million allocated in the Bud-

get, £350 million extra is allocated to community care, £70 million to children's social services and £20 million in support grants to meet the costs of implementing the Private Finance Initiative.

The abolition of nursery vouchers has freed £662 million for local authorities to spend on education of four-year olds, and £130 million has been set aside to help authorities cope with transitional costs incurred through local government reorganisation.

Conservatives and Liberal Democrats said the settlement would force council taxpayers to pay more for worse services.

John Prescott, page 20

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Robinson tries to spare Labour blushes

Andrew Pierce
on the turmoil
of a rich man
the Treasury
says has nothing
to conceal

JEFFREY ROBINSON offered to withdraw yesterday from the announcement of plans to curb tax breaks for middle-class savers to spare the Government embarrassment over his links to a £12 million offshore trust.

The multimillionaire Paymaster General feared that yesterday's Treasury press conference would be overshadowed by the weekend disclosure that he is a discretionary beneficiary of a fund in Guernsey. But Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, overruled Mr Robinson and ordered him to face the media for the first time since the revelations about his business affairs.

Yesterday a Treasury source said: "Jeffrey is a rich man who has got nothing to hide. He has done nothing wrong. He offered to stand aside but we were determined not to be blown off course. Geoffrey is a serious player."

Mr Robinson had put months of work into the new savings scheme and the launch was planned well before the controversy erupted over his financial affairs. "We considered putting in another Treasury minister but decided against it," the source said. "We didn't want to do anything which would have mucked up his hiding him way. He is an asset for the government."

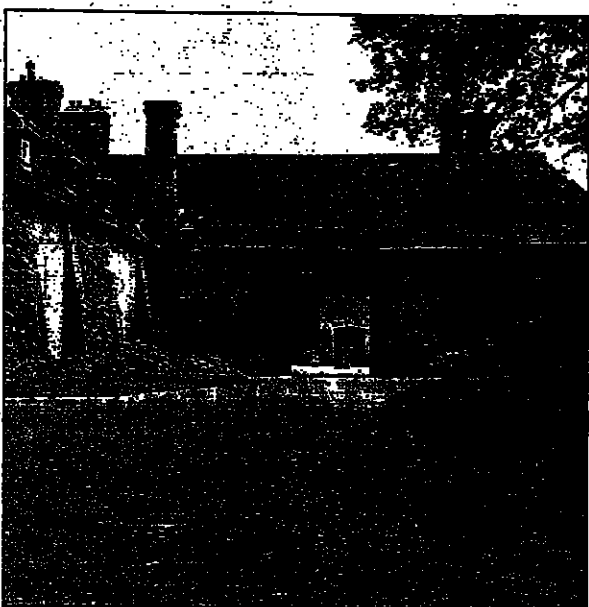
At last year's Labour conference Mr Brown, then Shadow Chancellor, said that in government the party would not tolerate Tory values. "A Labour Chancellor will not permit relief to millionaires in offshore tax havens," he said.

Yesterday the Treasury source said: "Jeffrey is a bit embarrassed about the trust but he could not close it down as he wanted to." It was set up by a long-standing friend of Mr Robinson, Madame Joska Bourgeois, a Belgian national living in Switzerland.

Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner



Mr Robinson's mansion in Stockbridge, Hampshire. He bought the 20-bedroom property for £800,000



The minister's main residence, Orchards, a Lutens house in Godalming, Surrey, and his villa in Tuscany



for Standards, is being pressed by the Tories to investigate why the Channel Island Orion Trust was not declared by the minister in the Commons Register of Interests.

Despite Downing Street and the Treasury's unswerving support for Mr Robinson's financial arrangements the Tories showed yesterday that they intend to keep up the pressure. Michael Heseltine, the former Deputy Prime Minister, who is worth £60 million, said that he had rejected accountants' advice to invest his wealth in a similar arrangement.

Mr Heseltine said he "flatly refused" the offshore trust option. Using such trusts involved accepting tax regimes which were outside the British

jurisdiction, he told BBC Radio 4.

"I wasn't prepared to do that because I think that, as a minister, it was quite difficult to explain to the vast majority of citizens, your own constituents — who would not have such advantages in their ordinary affairs — how you had found what they would see as escape routes of this sort," he said.

Asked if he thought all ministers should do the same as he had done in office, Mr Heseltine said: "I think if you are a minister in a government it is very difficult to explain how you have so ordered your affairs so that the tax regimes to which you are subjected are outside those of the control of the Govern-

ment of which you are a member."

During the week Mr Robinson, who owns mansions in Surrey and Hampshire, lives in a eight-floor penthouse in Park Lane, London, overlooking Hyde Park. He also has a villa in Cannes and an estate in Tuscany, which has become the favourite holiday retreat of Tony Blair and his family.

He bought Marsh Court, a Grade-I listed Lutens mansion, near Stockbridge, Hampshire, for £800,000. He is restoring the 20-bedroom property to its former glory. His main residence is Orchards, a Lutens masterpiece in Godalming, Surrey, which is worth more than £1 million.

Mr Robinson, MP for Coventry North West, is a close ally of the Chancellor. He became the saviour of the *New Statesman* in February 1996 and his shareholding in Coventry City Football Club is said to be worth £5 million. He amassed his personal wealth from his substantial shareholding in TransTec, the £175 million engineering company he founded 16 years ago. He borrowed £100,000 from Madame Bourgeois to set it up. His 7.2 per cent stake is worth more than £30 million. He earns a salary of £43,860 as an MP, having waived his ministerial entitlement. His rise to financial prominence began at the age of 35 as the Chief Executive of Jaguar.

During the press conference yesterday, Mr Robinson refused to entertain questions about the trust. "I have made a very full statement and I have nothing to add to it," he said.

The trust is not controlled by Mr Robinson but he and his family do stand to benefit from it, though the Paymaster Gen-

Questions raised over Paymaster and the socialite

Dominic Kennedy on Robinson's glamorous benefactor

WHEN Geoffrey Robinson, the Chief Executive of Jaguar, met the fabulously wealthy Belgian socialite Joska Bourgeois at the age of 35 he effectively secured a lucrative financial future.

But some three decades later the relationship between the Government minister and the glamorous older woman, who died in 1994 aged 81, has caused the first serious question marks over his political career.

It was Madame Bourgeois who showered millions of pounds on the precocious executive, who is now the holder of one of the key offices of state. The Paymaster General, who now writes cheques worth billions of pounds, will find the generous legacy she bestowed on her protégé in an offshore trust will come under increasing scrutiny.

Geoffrey Robinson MP was already a wealthy man when he met the elegant Belgian socialite but with her help he became a millionaire many times over.

He was regarded as the leading industrialist in the Commons when he was elected for Coventry in 1976, a Labour man on principle, having been drawn to the Left during the Vietnam War.

His other colourful business associates included Robert Maxwell and his son Kevin. But it was Mr Robinson's friendship with Mme Bourgeois which changed his fortune.

They met in the early 1970s when he was head of Innocent, British Leyland's Italian arm, and she had the franchise for selling Jaguars in her native Belgium. By the time he was elected to the Commons, he had already been made chief executive of Jaguar Cars at only 35.

Quite what the ageing Mme Bourgeois saw in the ambitious young son of a furniture maker is unclear. She was a childless divorcee, but her ex-husband George



Bourgeois: generous legacy for her protégé

Buydendyk, a former European chief executive of Good-year tyres, told *The Times* yesterday that he doubted she looked on him as some sort of surrogate son. Maybe he reminded her of the British airmen she sheltered as a Resistance heroine during the war. There are also stories that, as a glamorous waitress in a club for German officers, she passed information about the Nazis to freedom fighters. M Buydendyk is unsure. "They invent all kinds of things," he said.

Certainly, Mr Robinson advised Mme Bourgeois about the sale of her International Motor Company in 1979 to the British investment group Incheape. She was more than grateful. When he decided to

create TransTec, an electronics company, in 1981, Mme Bourgeois provided the £100,000 security he needed.

The company had a bumpy ride during the 1980s but is now widely admired and worth £175 million. The bulk of his shares, £18 million worth, is held in a blind trust as all ministers' assets are supposed to be.

The remaining £13 million worth are in Orion Trust, created on the tax haven of Guernsey by Mme Bourgeois for Mr Robinson's family.

Mr Robinson, 59, has disclosed how many of his shares have been sold to the trust, but it is unknown how much else has been put there by, for example, Mme Bourgeois. He is a discretionary beneficiary so he only gets money if the directors of the trust decide he should. But their names are also undisclosed.

Mme Bourgeois was something of a serial tax avoider. She never returned to her native Belgium after 1979 because of unsettled tax problems, instead choosing exile in Geneva, beyond the reach of the Belgian taxman.

Mr Robinson and his opera singer wife, Marie-Elena Giorgio, would often go to her home in Cannes and she in return visited theirs in Godalming, Surrey. He was said to have described her to colleagues as "the 12th richest woman in the world".

She would send oil paintings to his Coventry office, where they were hung on the walls. When she died aged 81 in Cannes in 1994, Mr Robinson helped organise her funeral. He is one of the main beneficiaries of her fortune, which was estimated at £35 million.

After her death, he spent £5 million on Coventry City Football Club shares, and was a key mover behind the axing of Ron Atkinson. In the same month that he became a soccer mogul, he bought the *New Statesman* for £500,000.



Geoffrey Robinson celebrating general election victory in Coventry

What the public should be told

By CHRIS AYRES

ALTHOUGH Geoffrey Robinson claims that the £12.5 million offshore trust of which he is a beneficiary was operated at arm's length he still has many difficult questions to answer.

The biggest mystery surrounds the number of shares in TransTec, the company he founded 16 years ago, that are held by his offshore Orion trust, and why that number rose to the tune of £3 million when Mr Robinson joined the Government. Concern also surrounds Stenbell, the private company partly owned by Mr Robinson which is £250,000 in debt yet managed to buy 9.8 million shares in TransTec then transfer them to the Orion trust.

The *Times* feels that he should answer the following: □ Why did he sell the right to buy £10 million worth of TransTec shares last year, to a company called Stenbell? How much of Stenbell does he own and what does it do? □ Why then were the shares passed on to Orion, an offshore tax-free trust? What part did he play in this transaction? Why the two-part sale?

□ Apart from Orion, does he hold any other of his 30.4 million TransTec shares in offshore trusts? Does he own shares in other companies? □ Was Orion the family trust noted in TransTec's 1996 annual report in which he held 9.8 million shares last year? □ Who increased the holding of this trust to 12.7 million shares in September this year, after he had joined the Government, bringing its value to £12.5 million? Did he play any part in this transaction? □ What other assets are held in Orion apart from the TransTec shares. How wealthy is the trust? □ Why and when did he make a personal loan of \$1 million to Roll Centre Inc., a company later bought by TransTec? How much money is he still owed by companies to which he has made personal loans? □ Last year TransTec paid him £74,000 as a pension contribution. Is he still receiving these contributions or any other company benefits? □ What kind of agreement did he make with Robert Maxwell when in 1991 Mr Robinson merged TransTec with Central and Sheerwood, the company Maxwell chaired and had a significant shareholding in? □ Why did Robert Maxwell decide to sell his stake in the company back to TransTec just weeks before his death?

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Gore goes to Kyoto with new deal on emissions

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

AMERICA last night appeared to have made a dramatic new compromise to cut greenhouse gases as Al Gore, the Vice-President, prepared to walk a political tightrope at the United Nations summit on global warming in Kyoto.

The United States, facing a cool greeting in Japan for its modest initial stance in the talks, yesterday went on the diplomatic offensive, offering a concession that proposed reductions by industrialised nations of up to 5 per cent from their 1990 levels in the years 2008 to 2012.

Under pressure from domestic industries reliant on fossil fuel, America previously had said that the industrialised nations should reduce emissions of greenhouse gases to 1990 levels in those years, a proposal that European countries condemned as too weak. Both Britain and Germany favour a cut of 15 per cent.

The latest concession, reported by *Yomiuri Shimbun*, appeared to be an attempt to smooth the path for Mr Gore whose decision to join the Kyoto talks next Monday was made at the eleventh hour.

After much discussion at the White House the Vice-President, who is also the author of *Earth in the Balance*, a definitive work on global warming, finally agreed to fly to Japan. He will spend just 12 hours on the ground, address the 1,500 delegates from more than 160

countries but take no part in the official negotiation.

Even after President Clinton announced the decision to send his deputy, Mr Gore tried to dampen expectations about what may be accomplished in Kyoto. "We are prepared to walk away from an agreement that we don't think will work," he said.

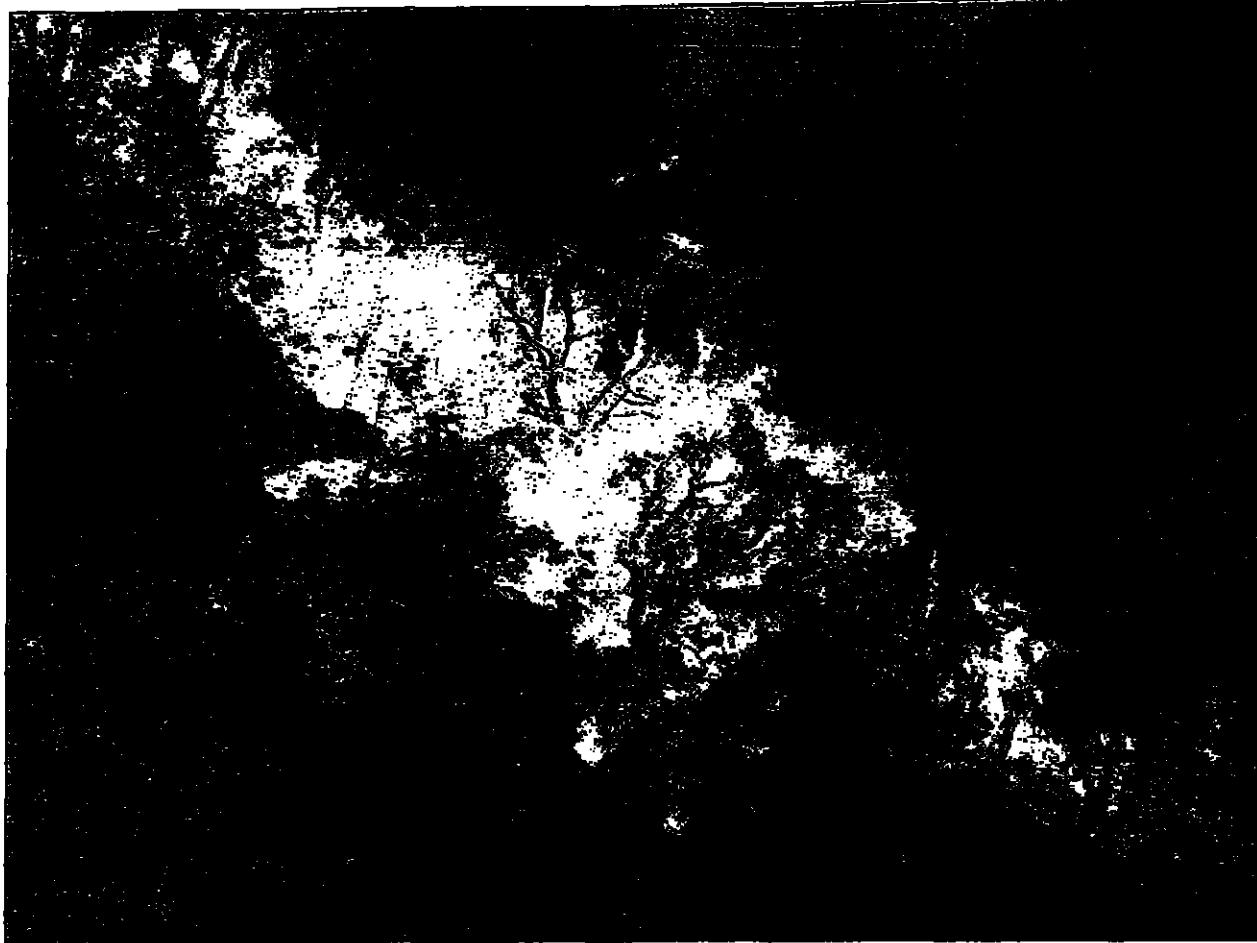
The White House had earlier played down the possibility of either Mr Clinton or Mr Gore attending the Kyoto talks. But the Vice-President, with an eye to his presidential ambitions in 2000, had been facing criticism among his traditionally strong allies in the environmental movement.

Environmentalists were concerned that his brief appearance as a knight in shining armour would merely be viewed as a token to deflect criticism from the position taken by the United States, the world's biggest polluter.

America has made it clear that any compromise must be deemed realistic by its industrial base at home and that is certain to differ substantially from plans offered by the European Union to limit carbon monoxide and other gases in the millennium.

Negotiators for the EU said the impasse between the United States and the Third World could destroy the entire talks but said Europe was hoping to offer itself as a broker to end the deadlock.

"We are ready to walk away from an agreement that we don't think will work"



One of hundreds of bushfires rages near Sydney yesterday as, above right, a resident stands in front of the smoking ruins of his home at Menai on the city's southern outskirts



A man and his three children flee their home in Menai as a firestorm, whipped up by gales, races down on the Sydney suburb. Up to 20 homes were destroyed in this area alone and a thick pall of smoke hangs over the city

Two die as fires threaten Sydney

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

TWO firemen were killed, two were injured and an estimated 20 homes destroyed as bushfires raged across New South Wales in Australia yesterday.

More than 400 separate blazes broke out, half of them reported to be out of control. At one stage flames licked Sydney's northern and southern suburbs, forcing the evacuation of hundreds of residents and prompting fire chiefs to compare conditions with the last big bushfire disaster of January 1993, when four people died and more than 100 homes were destroyed.

"The situation is very serious," Gilly Paxton, of the New South Wales Royal Fire Service, said.

The Sydney fires caused rush hour traffic jams as commuters drove home from work in the smoky conditions. Schools and nursing homes were evacuated. Fumes from burning eucalypt-

us trees also caused problems for the sick and elderly. In the southern Sydney suburbs some residents made desperate but futile attempts to save their homes with buckets of water and garden hoses.

The worst-affected areas were in the countryside, including Coonabarabran, about 250 miles northwest of Sydney, where a huge crescent of flame destroyed 320,000 acres of bushland and injured two firemen. At Lithgow, west of the Blue Mountains, two firefighters died after being trapped by a blaze in heavily wooded hills.

The weather worsened last night as high winds whipped up flames and threatened other areas. Phil Koperberg, the bushfire chief commissioner, said that strong southerly winds would make things much worse.

The real concern is for the next few days when even hotter and windier conditions are forecast.

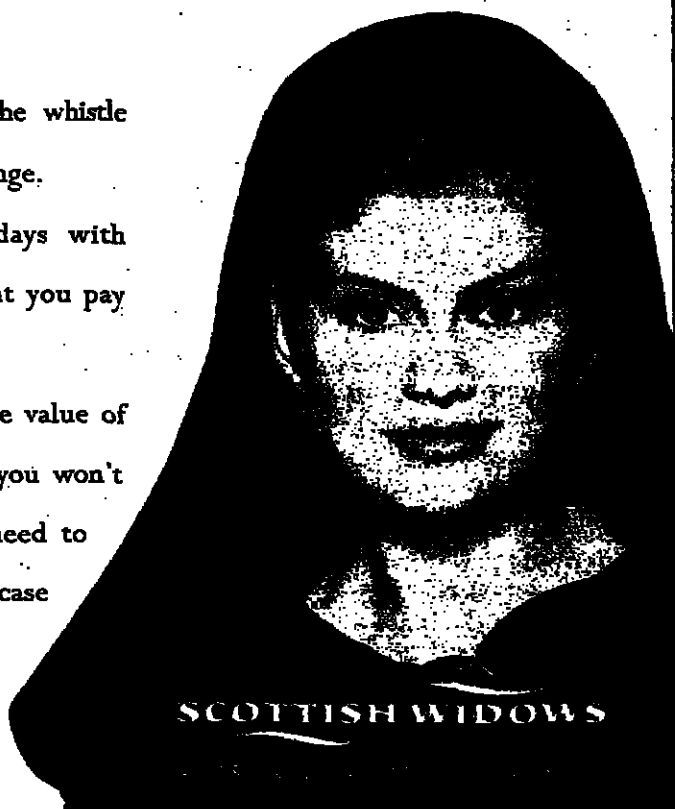
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Mrs Mar
daughter
torture

Netanyahu



هكذا من الذهب

Mrs Mandela's daughter faces torture claim

THE youngest daughter of President Mandela was yesterday alleged to have joined her mother in torture sessions and was implicated as an accessory in at least one killing in evidence to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

At the hearing into the activities of Mrs Madikizela-Mandela and her gang of thuggish bodyguards, the so-called Mandela United Football Club, Zindziwa Mandela, 37, smiled and chewed gum as Gift Ntombeni, a former member of the club, said she had "taken after her mother".

Mr Ntombeni added: "She is capable of any deed whatsoever."

The picture of the Mandela home that emerged from yesterday's evidence was a place familiar with paranoia, betrayal, torture and murder.

Dressed in a white polka dot top and black skirt, Ms Mandela smiled and shook her head when Mr Ntombeni said that either she or her mother had ordered the assassination of Tholi Dlamini, a member of the club who had said he wanted to leave to pursue his interest in ballroom dancing.

Mr Ntombeni said he had witnessed the murder of Tholi, 19, who was shot by Sizwe Sithole, Zinzi's lover at the

Winnie's home was the setting for paranoia and betrayal, writes Sam Kiley

time, in 1988. Ms Mandela had four children by different partners, including Sithole, during the 1980s when she was living with her mother in the Soweto mansion which was also the headquarters of the football club.

Born shortly before President Mandela began his 27 years in prison, Ms Mandela was brought up by her mother, who had a succession of lovers during the years when she was not herself in detention.

Inside the Mandela mansion, most members of the "football club" who joined after finding themselves unemployed, smoked marijuana and drank heavily. They camped in groups of up to a dozen in a back room next to Mrs Mandela's jacuzzi, and joined in torture sessions led either by herself or her daughter. Several witnesses have

testified that they were given weapons training in Ms Mandela's bedroom where they drank and joked before going out on "operations".

Leratodi Ikaneng, a former member of the club, said that Ms Mandela's role as a torturer began when four local youths were brought to the house after they had been accused of raping a fellow pupil in June 1988. The youths were taken into a shed at the back of the home called "Lusaka" where they were thrashed with sjamboks, or whips.

"Zinzi is the one who instigated it saying they were rapists and that they must be tortured," Mr Ikaneng said.

On another occasion Ms Mandela "carved the letters ANC into the chest and back" of a victim hunted down by other members of the club, Mr Ntombeni said. "She did it with a plastic implement."

The club selected ordinary victims for its "hunts" from a book kept at the gates of the home in which local people would write the names of "troublemakers".

Mrs Mandela, 63, and her daughter would wait at home while "we would go out and hunt that person down and get them back to the yard... we would beat them and burn their feet. Mrs Mandela or



Winnie Mandela and her daughter Zindziwa studying documents at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission yesterday

Zinzi would lead the assaults," Mr Ntombeni said.

Over the past seven days the commission, which is hearing evidence of human rights abuses and apartheid-era crimes, has heard from witnesses that to be accused of being a police informer was a death sentence.

Mr Ntombeni said: "You wouldn't dare defy Winnie. Whenever you did you were

referred to as an informer." He decided to leave the club after Ms Mandela became furious that he had reported the death of a club member to Sithole, her lover. "She asked me why had I told Sizwe and called me an impimpi [informer]. I realised I was no longer safe," he said.

A second convicted murderer meanwhile told the commission that Mrs Mandela

ordered the killing of a Soweto doctor and offered 20,000 rands (about £5,300 at the time) for the job. Thulani Dlamini, 28, echoed Monday's evidence by Cyril Mbatha that Mrs Mandela promised them the money for killing Abu-Baker Asvat, a popular Soweto doctor, in 1989.

Dlamini, like Mbatha, said they had gone to Asvat's office where Mbatha shot the doc-

tor. They were arrested before Mrs Mandela paid them the promised money, he said.

Asvat and Stompie Moeketsi Seipei, a teenage activist, are among at least six people Mrs Mandela is alleged to have killed or had killed. Jerry Richardson, head of the club, has applied to the commission for amnesty for Seipei's murder, saying he "slaughtered him like a sheep"

with garden shears. Mrs Mandela's troubles mounted outside the hearing as well yesterday when she was rebuked by ANC leaders for accusing them of failing voters. Cheryl Carolus, the acting General Secretary, said Mrs Mandela had committed an "improper and cowardly" act by saying ANC leaders had betrayed those who elected the party in 1994.

Netanyahu threatens to annex Arafat's 'independent' state



Netanyahu: tough stance

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, warned Yasser Arafat yesterday that Israel would annex the occupied West Bank if he fulfilled his pledge to declare an independent Palestinian state there no later than mid-1999.

The threat, which Western diplomats predicted could spark another Middle East war, was supported by Yitzhak Mordechai, his Defence Minister, who said: "If Arafat takes unilateral measures, we have the capacity to enforce our own one-sided steps." The tough new stance

was taken in response to a promise by Mr Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, to issue a unilateral declaration of independence in the Arab self-rule areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in May 1999 if no final peace settlement has been reached by then.

The deadline was laid down at the end of the five-year interim negotiating period in the Oslo peace accord which many of Mr Netanyahu's supporters want scrapped. Mr Arafat threw down the gauntlet to the Israelis last month by pledging that once the Palestinians had declared independence, he would appeal to the world

to support the new state and grant it diplomatic recognition.

"If Arafat carries out a step like that, he will explode the [1993] agreement," Mr Netanyahu told members of the hawkish Tsomet Party, one of his coalition partners. "In response, I will declare annexation of the [West Bank] Jordan Rift Valley and other territory, maybe all of it."

Last night, Mr Arafat hit back by saying in Ramallah: "We have heard many statements from Mr Netanyahu. Let it be quite clear to all that the state of Palestine exists and al-Quds al-Sharif (Jerusalem) will be its capital, which was

occupied in 1967." Israel annexed east Jerusalem after conquering it from Jordan in the 1967 War and it has extended Israeli law to the Golan Heights, seized from Syria in the same conflict. Calls by Jewish settlers for annexation of the West Bank, territory they call Eretz Israel, or the biblical land of Israel, have so far been resisted because of the danger of sparking a new war.

Western diplomatic sources said last night that West Bank annexation was almost guaranteed to provoke military retaliation from Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria which, as "frontline states", would be under Arab pressure to come to

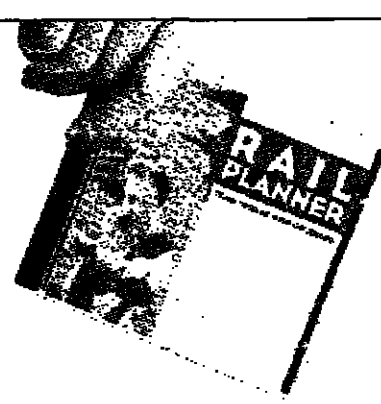
the support of the Palestinians. It would also prompt an armed response from the 30,000 Palestinian policemen now under Mr Arafat's command, a force that constitutes an army in all but name. Recent intelligence reports have revealed moves by the Palestinians to smuggle in anti-tank weapons and other powerful additions to their legal armoury.

Ehud Barak, leader of the main opposition Labour Party and a former Chief of Staff, said: "Netanyahu's slip of the tongue causes grave danger to the possibility of the chance of reaching a political arrangement and damages the security of the country." Ephraim

Sneh, a Labour deputy and former military governor of the West Bank, said: "Netanyahu's manoeuvres are destined to cause bloodshed."

Government spokesmen said that there was no chance of Mr Netanyahu retracting his remarks.

Members of Tsomet said that keeping open the annexation option was a key reason why Mr Netanyahu is so reluctant to hand over more Israeli-occupied West Bank land to the PLO, as stipulated by the peace agreement. "The less land the Palestinians control in the early stages, the easier it will be for us to annex in the future," one said.



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Sharif wins all as Pakistan state crumbles

THE President of Pakistan resigned last night after losing a power struggle with Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister. It took the Pakistan Army, desperate to avoid a coup, to save what is left of a crumbling democracy. The Islamic state, exhausted by weeks of conflict, has been left in constitutional and economic chaos.

Mr Sharif now looks unsalvageable, his authoritarian tendencies well established, the army unwilling to topple him and the National Assembly firmly under his control. No elected leader has enjoyed such power. With so few restraints, there will be overwhelming temptation to move towards a more dictatorial style of government.

President Leghari, in an emotional farewell speech from the presidential palace, said that he held the constitution above self-interest: hardly a convincing comment after a long battle that has almost destroyed vital government and judicial institutions.

The Supreme Court has in effect collapsed in a mutiny against the Chief Justice, also locked in a losing fight with Mr Sharif. He will be ousted soon — another victim of the Prime Minister's power.

Recent events are a calamity for a country with no centres

Constitutional chaos reigns in Islamabad, Christopher Thomas reports

of sustainable power save for the army. Mr Leghari would not have gone without being pushed, however subtly, by the generals. They were bound to engineer the Prime Minister's survival because the only alternative was martial law, a fact that emboldened Mr Sharif to take on two such important institutions.

The office of the presidency, once treated with respect, is now discredited by the dirty tactics of the past weeks. The higher judiciary has been soiled by its political partiality. Pakistan has moved a notch closer to becoming a failed state and some argue it already is one. Islamic extremists sense their time may be coming as the nation staggers towards one of its greatest financial crises.

Sajjad Ali Shah, the Chief Justice, who fought Mr Sharif over who had the right to

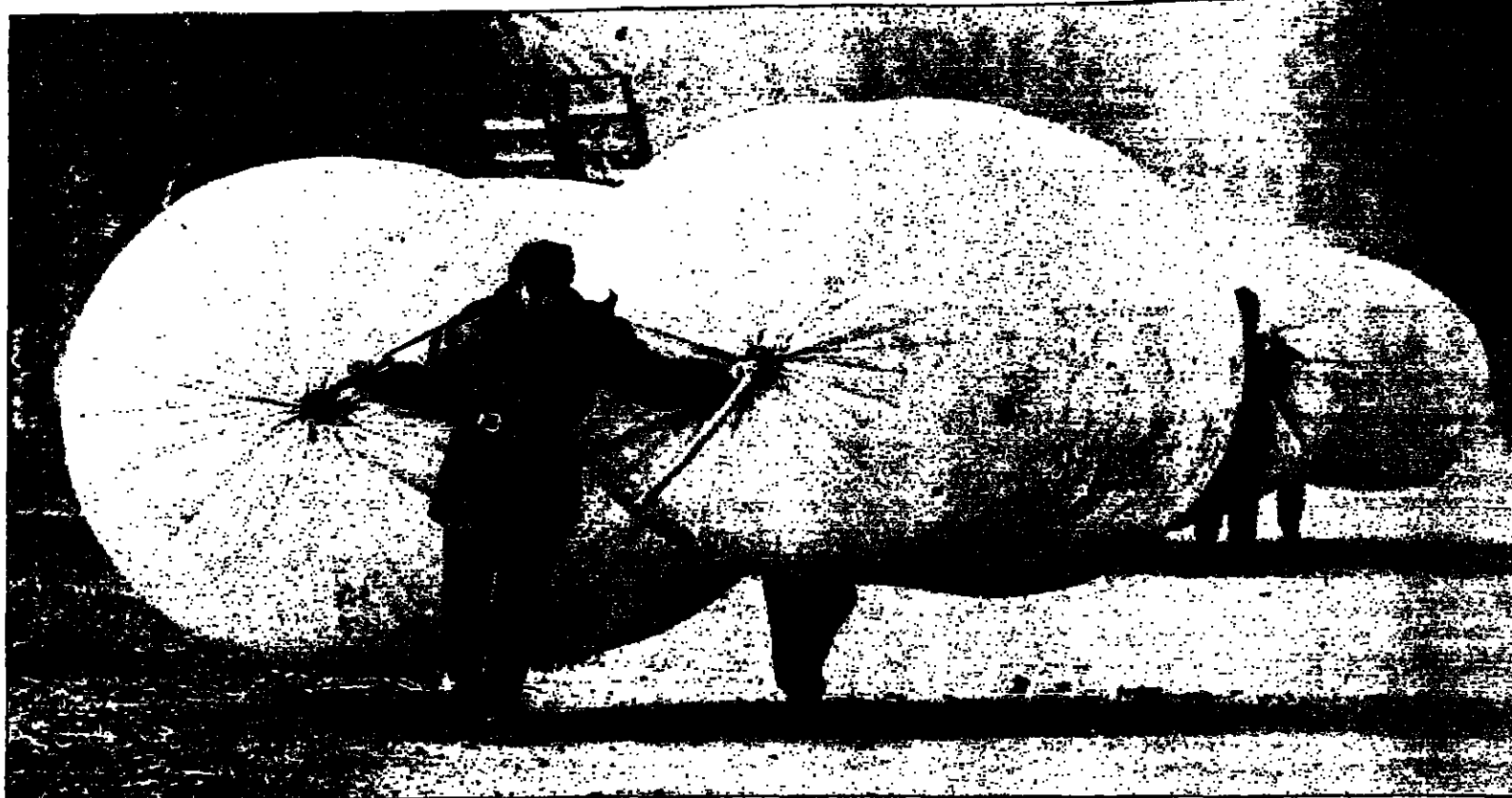
appoint senior judges, yesterday restored the authority of the President to dismiss the Prime Minister, a desperate last attempt to get rid of Mr Sharif. It was backed by the President and the Government immediately began moves to impeach him.

Rebel judges challenged Mr Sharif's right to make the ruling, leaving the authority of the nation's ultimate legal arbiter in tatters. In effect, there is no longer a Supreme Court in Pakistan. Mr Sharif will ensure that the next President and Chief Justice are to his liking. He is considering various constitutional changes further to entrench his authority.

Every government elected since the end of martial law in 1985 has been dismissed by the President, including Mr Sharif's in his first term of office. Benazir Bhutto's administration was dismissed last year under the same provision. Both had fallen foul of the army. Mr Sharif used his huge parliamentary majority eight months ago to remove the power of dismissal.

Never has Pakistan faced such a prolonged constitutional mess. Nor has it put its parliamentary democracy so decisively on the line since its restoration in 1985. Mr Sharif raised the stakes on Monday night by attacking the Chief Justice and the President on television, accusing them of conspiring against him. That, it turns out, was a reasonable interpretation.

Government in Islamabad remains at a standstill and the stock market has fallen. Foreign exchange reserves have plunged. In another era the army would have taken over. This time, the looming economic crisis doubtless deterred it from doing so, given the certainty that international financial institutions would have shunned a nation led by military dictators.



Bags of energy: Chinese farmers near the Zhongyuan oilfields in the central province of Henan carry home plastic bags filled with natural gas which they collected illegally from roadside wells. Oil companies lose £1.5 million a year through thefts of the gas, used for cooking and heating

Father wins plea over killing disabled girl

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

IN AN unprecedented verdict that outraged disabled rights groups yesterday, a Canadian farmer convicted of killing his handicapped daughter was exempted from the mandatory sentence for second degree murder and instead jailed for a year.

Robert Latimer, 44, had confessed that four years ago he killed Tracy, 12, as an act of mercy to spare her the increasing horrors of encroaching cerebral palsy.

Twice convicted of second degree murder, Latimer's case has become both a cause célèbre and a lightning rod in the debate over euthanasia in Canada, a country that enshrines the rights of disabled people at the heart of its Constitution.

In a decision which dismayed the disabled community last night, however, a judge for the first time in Canadian

history swept aside the mandatory minimum sentence of 25 years and ordered Latimer to spend one year behind bars and 364 days on probation at his wheat farm in the western province of Saskatchewan. Judge Ted Noble said a mandatory life sentence would be a "cruel and unusual punishment".

His ruling was condemned by disabled groups which said it was a sign of effective support for the "barnyard ethics" of killing the weak and infirm. A coalition of organisations is campaigning to have the verdict overturned through the Canadian Supreme Court.

"We are horrified," said Diane Richler of the Canadian Association for Community Living, an advocacy group for the disabled. "This verdict is terrifying for anyone who has a disability in Canada. Tracy

Latimer did not choose to die. She was murdered and justice should be served." Latimer admitted that in October 1993, while his wife and three other children were at church, he carried Tracy out of the family farmhouse in Wilkie and placed her in his pickup truck.

After feeding a pipe from the exhaust into the cab, he left the engine running and watched through the window for the seven minutes it took Tracy to die. "If she had started to cry I would have taken her out of there," he said.

During the trial Latimer said that surgery performed on Tracy a year before her death had transformed her into a victim in constant agony. "With the combination of a feeding tube, rods in her back, the leg cut and flopping around and bedsores, how can people say she was a happy little girl?" Latimer said.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Upper-caste Hindus massacre villagers

Lakshmanpur: Hundreds of upper-caste Hindus slaughtered at least 64 people in an overnight attack in this east Indian village of low-caste farmers, 75 miles from Patna, the Bihar state capital. All the victims, nineteen of them teenagers and four aged under five, were low-caste Hindus.

Police blamed the Ranbir Sena, an illegal private militia composed mostly of upper-caste landowners. The local police chief said about 300 armed men entered homes at night and methodically shot and stabbed their victims for two hours. (AP)

Blast kills Russian miners

Moscow: At least 60 Russian miners out of more than 100 underground were killed in an explosion at Zyrjanovskaya coalmine in Novokuznetsk, Western Siberia (Robin Lodge writes). Rescuers were still bringing bodies to the surface 18 hours after the blast, which left six miners suffering serious burns.

Gaddafi thanked by Chirac

Paris: President Chirac of France has called for improved relations between France and Libya (Ben Macintyre writes). In a personal message, M Chirac also thanked Colonel Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, for Tripoli's help in the investigation of the terrorist bombing of a French airliner in 1989.

Giuliani's unwanted publicity

New York: A judge here has rejected an attempt by Rudolph Giuliani, the Mayor, right, to ban advertisements poking fun at him, with the tart comment: "Who would think that the Mayor would object to more publicity?" (James Bone writes). Mr Giuliani had gone to court to fight advertisements placed by New York magazine because they took his name in vain. The ads described the glossy as "possibly the only good thing in New York Rudy hasn't taken credit for".



'Illegal marriage' couple shot

Peshawar: A woman who married her son-in-law was shot dead by family members after tribal clerics in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province ruled the marriage contravened Islamic law. Her son-in-law, whom she had married four years ago, was also executed. They had two children. (AP)

Mubarak sons end libel case

Cairo: Two sons of President Mubarak of Egypt dropped a libel action against six journalists after a new apology — leading al-Sharq al-Awsat, the Arab daily newspaper, to reopen its office here. The journalists had appealed after being found guilty over a promotion for an ultimately unpublished article. (AP)

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World Cup seedings, page 48

World Cup pitched into green row

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A ROW has broken out at the new World Cup football stadium outside Paris amid claims that underground pollution at the site is turning the pitch yellow.

The Stade de France, where next year's World Cup final will be played on July 12, is built on the site of a former gasworks and French environmental groups allege that the "jaundice" affecting the newly laid grass is the result of inadequate anti-pollution measures.

The dispute, erupting just before tomorrow's World Cup draw in Marseilles, has embarrassed the stadium authorities, who insist that the odd colour in parts of the new pitch is a minor and temporary problem. "The grass might be slightly less beautiful than usual at the moment, but that is because it has just been treated. It is absolutely not the result of pollution," Stephanie Husson, a stadium official, said.

Environmentalists, however, say that groundwater beneath the pitch is saturated with hydrocarbons and other toxic chemical waste left by the former

gasworks. "The yellowing is an indicator of the pollution," Jacky Bonnemains, head of the environmental pressure group Robin des Bois, said this week. "The grass is growing very badly as a direct result of the underground contamination, which was just covered up." He said that the area has been on a national

'The grass might be slightly less beautiful than usual but it is not the result of pollution'

inventory of polluted sites since 1994. The designers of the stadium, which was built in 31 months at a cost of £250 million, say that elaborate measures are in place to prevent pollution seeping to the surface, including plastic sheeting and a thick layer of concrete below the soil. M Bonnemains said that such precau-

tions were simply evidence that the architects were afraid of the effects of gas pollution.

The pitch first began developing yellow areas last month. Jean-Pierre Lebourcier, consultant lawn engineer for the Stade de France, put the problem down to sanding and about 30 square yards were "patched" with new turf, producing an effect which the newspaper *Le Parisien* compared to the skin disease alopecia. M Lebourcier said that the condition would clear up quickly, but the pitch remains distinctly off-colour. The weekly *Journal du Dimanche* reported that gardeners believed this was due to "mismanaged grass-cutting".

Ecologists say that a serious flood, causing the polluted groundwater to rise, could damage the grass and might even affect players or spectators in hot conditions. M Bonnemains said that the level of pollution was known before construction started.

FROM AHMED FAZI IN DHAKA

THE Bangladesh authorities and the Chakma rebels signed a peace accord yesterday, closing a bloody chapter in a two-decade-old campaign for a tribal homeland in the country's southeastern hills.

The landmark agreement was reached after seven

rounds of talks between government representatives and the Shanti Bahini tribal guerrillas over the past year. J. B. Larma, the former guerrilla commander who led the protracted negotiations with the Government, signed the accord for the rebels.

Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister, who watched the signing ceremony along with

her Cabinet colleagues and senior army generals, said the accord was intended to restore peace on the lush Chittagong Hill Tracts after an on-off bush war that had left 10,000 people, mostly civilians, dead.

The accord provides for a 22-member regional council headed by a tribal leader with sweeping autonomy to administer the 5,000 square miles of

hills rising from the Bay of Bengal and bordering eastern India and Burma. Earlier, tribal rebels scaled down their demand for independence.

The armed campaign for a separate homeland for the half a million minority tribe dominated by ethnic Buddhist Chakmas had meant keeping about 20,000 regular soldiers and paramilitary troops and

armed police in the area. Thousands of tribal families had fled the border to escape the fighting.

The insurgency was sparked off by a decision of a former military regime to settle Bengali Muslims in the hills under state patronage in the 1970s. Ordinary tribes complained of being swamped by the influx of people from

the plains. Rebel tribesmen armed with both automatic guns and traditional spears are to surrender their weapons under an amnesty.

The Government will in return pull back the army from suspected guerrilla hide-outs. The Government also agreed to frame laws banning the sale of tribal land to non-tribal individuals.

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Better off without him

Nicole Contos was left at the altar when her fiancé bolted to Tahiti. Athena Malpas, who was an English guest at the extravagant bridal shower, thinks Nicole had a lucky escape

The unfortunate plight of Nicole Contos, who was left standing alone at the altar, has, for reasons beyond me, snowballed into a full media event in New York. In no time at all, this obscure GAP (Greek American Princess) has gone from being a kindergarten teacher to publicly performing her own personal Greek tragedy.

The story has been covered by CBS, ABC, NBC, CNN and Fox TV; she has appeared twice on the cover of the *New York Daily News*; she has turned down the Sally Jesse Raphael Show but is holding out for Oprah. Bu Paul has

'I might somehow have put a curse on her special day'

become a big supporter with his slogan "Yo, go Nicole!" the controversial and outspoken Howard Stern quipped less sympathetically, "Hey, you can't blame the guy. She needs implants." Barbara Walters seems unconvinced. David Letterman has yet to comment. Book deals and movie

rights are apparently being negotiated. Here in the UK, the story has managed to find its way into the broadsheets and tabloids, and was covered by radio and television.

Once upon a time, a Greek wedding was a simple affair; an occasion for close friends and family to celebrate the joining together of two young people. A proposal would be followed by a traditional engagement service blessed by a priest, and simple gold bands would be exchanged. Engraved in each band would be the names of the betrothed. These rings were worn on the left hand until the wedding, when they would be transferred to the right hand.

Weddings are now like Christmas, no longer sacred. No more are they private

events shared with those nearest and dearest, but with everybody and anybody — and if you are deemed interesting enough, you can invite the readers of *Hello!* and *OK!* to share your special day as well. Once the engagement is announced you are on the matrimonial conveyer belt, and there are now wedding coordinators and wedding consultants to help you to spend, spend, spend while you are on the way. Even before they exchange vows, the bride and groom will have held engagement parties, bridal showers, stag nights, hen parties and rehearsal dinners.

It is difficult to understand why Nicole got caught up in this media circus. After all the lengthy preparations and warm-up celebrations, followed by the shock of the groom fleeing on honeymoon by himself, one would have thought that she would take some time off to get over it. She was admired and applauded for going on with the reception regardless, and being the first to dance to *I Will Survive*.

After such a heroic performance, a rather dignified Garboesque "I want to be alone" response to any media interest was expected. But the show appears to have gone on with a remarkable twist to the plot that has left people in her circle feeling uncomfortable.

During a recent visit to New York I had the pleasure of attending Nicole's bridal shower. I cannot claim to be more than a passing acquaintance, but a mutual friend thought it would be nice for the bride-to-be to meet someone from London who would be able to take Nicole under her wing when she moved to England after the nuptials. I

couldn't help feeling, however, when I heard the news about the groom's failure to materialise at the wedding a month later, that my presence at the shower might have had the same effect as the wicked witch at Sleeping Beauty's christening. Had I somehow unwittingly put a curse on the proceedings?

For those not in the know, a bridal shower is one of those strange ritual gatherings that take place as a prequel to the actual wedding celebrations. This is an American tradition that involves a lot of women getting together to shower the bride with gifts and goodwill as she embarks on the path to matrimony. Bridal showers used to be small, intimate, girls-only events, organised in someone's home for friends to giggle over gifts of naughty nighties and edible underwear. Now they have evolved into full-blown receptions, attended by many females, and the gifts are purchased from a separate list from the main wedding list and at an exclusive department store.

My experience at this gathering was an example of how excessive these wedding festivities have become. I arrived late at an Upper East Side hotel to what I expected would be an informal and relaxed gathering, only to find that a formal, sit-down English tea was in progress. Only the New York *haute bourgeoisie* hold these Merchant Ivory-style tea parties — I cannot remember when, outside the portals of Fortnum & Mason. I last attended tea complete with cucumber sandwiches in England. The tables were sumptuously laid with fine china and cutlery, decorated with lovely flowers, stands were laden with little cakes, there were scones, cream and jam as well as delicately cut sandwiches. The waiters discreetly moved from table to table serving tea from elegant silver teapots.

Despite this feast I was the only one happily spreading cream and jam on my scones. The women seated at my table seemed to subscribe to the philosophy that you can never be too rich or too thin; their food remained untouched. They were all impeccably groomed.

I noticed there was a lot of grey, grey being this year's fashionable colour, and Hermès Kelly bags appeared to be *de rigueur*. Their faces were more Jackie than Jackie's; expressionless and cold. They wore the official and superficial smiles more commonly associated with a senator's wife enduring a fundraising dinner. Girlish joy and spontaneity were notably scarce. I cannot say I found myself in overwhelmingly warm and friendly company. Mind you, I don't think I did my best to endear myself to them. "You're from London?" I was asked. "Yes," I replied, popping a sandwich into my mouth. "You must have been devastated when Diana died?" Eyes looked at me with deepest sympathy. "Well, no actually. Frankly after the mass hysteria that gripped Britain, I couldn't have been more relieved when they finally laid her to rest and we got back to normal life."

All I heard was the shocked chink of cup against saucer and my gaze was met with silence and horrified stares. "Well, we loved her," said my neighbour recovering. "She was like our Princess." The message was very clear — we appreciated her, even if you didn't. "I can still remember the way she looked at Charles on her wedding day — so in love," added another. "It was like a fairytale."

"Well, yes it certainly was that — a fairytale," I conceded. Thankfully, the waiter arrived to offer me another cup of tea. I was tempted to ask for a large vodka tonic, but resisted. Instead I excused myself, locked myself in the ladies and smoked an illicit cigarette practically in one breath.

When I emerged from indulging my politically incorrect habit, the bride-to-be had started opening her large pile of gifts, including turquoise boxes from Tiffany and green boxes from the exclusive kitchenware shop, Williams-Sonoma. I noticed that she seemed to be receiving two of everything. I asked if her wedding consultant had made a mistake. "Oh no," I was told. "She's ordered two of everything. One set for her apartment in New York and the other for her new home in England." "Where is



Jilted bride Nicole Contos, courted by press and TV alike, is said to be negotiating book and film rights

she going to live?" I inquired. "On the Wentworth Estate," her friend and bridesmaid-to-be answered proudly. I obviously failed to give the right reaction. "Do you know the Wentworth Estate?" She pronounced it Went Worth. Again I looked blank. "It's supposed to be really beautiful, set on a golf course, and Fergie lives there." At that point, rather than risk alienating myself further by passing comment

on that particular fairy princess, I excused myself for another nicotine fix.

In retrospect, Nicole, I certainly hope my cynicism about fairytale weddings and princesses did not cast an evil spell over what was to be your special day.

On the other hand, perhaps I brought you good luck. Once your busy schedule has died down, maybe you'll find time to come to London. I'd love to

invite you to a proper English tea, served in a mug, possibly along with a packet of Jaffa Cakes and tell you how you have been saved from a life of boredom.

I mean, what twenty-something girl in her right mind would want to swap the excitement of Manhattan for suburban Wentworth, Surrey. Besides, in Manhattan you get a much better class of neighbour.

Miracle cure? Maybe

Anjana Ahuja on alternative treatments

ASHLEY FALLON has a life quite unlike those of most five-year-old girls. She has suffered from eczema since she was three months old, she scratches herself until she bleeds and she needs an armful of steroid creams, coal tar bandages and pills just to get to sleep each night. Ashley's father left the family home recently, and a turbulent home life is thought to make matters worse.

Her mother, Michelle, complains that Ashley is "prescribed the same things over and over again". Not surprisingly, she is losing faith with conventional treatments. In desperation, the Fallons, from North London, have turned to homeopathy, which works on the principle that a substance that causes illness can cure when administered in very low quantities.

Ashley is featured in *Natural Born Healers* (Channel 4, tomorrow, 8pm), a series of documentaries on alternative therapies. Each programme examines the effects of a treatment, such as homeopathy, on one individual over three months. Refreshingly, the series does not show alternative therapists as miracle-workers. Instead, it explores the relationship between orthodox and complementary medicine, which involves sceptical GPs who must juggle their shrinking budgets with alternative therapists who are under pressure to produce immediate results (and rarely do) and desperate patients willing to try anything.

WITHIN three weeks of treatment at the Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital, Ashley was happier and the scratching had died down. It was, Mrs Fallon, believes, her daughter's longest remission in five years.

However, Dr Cornel Fleming, the family's GP, who describes Ashley's condition as very bad, does not believe that homeopathy can claim the credit. He says: "The kind of dilutions they use are ridiculous. It's the equivalent of dropping an aspirin in the Boulder Dam, and giving water to someone to drink to cure a headache." Ashley's improvement, he says, is because eczema waxes and wanes, and the condition was lying low at the time of treatment. He also thinks positive thinking helped. "It's a sympathetic magic," he says.

His suspicions were confirmed when the eczema flared up again soon afterwards.

Nigella Lawson is away.

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'I do the washing-up'

Roger Scruton has views that put him at odds with fellow philosophers. Interview by Jason Cowley

It is hard not to have an opinion about Roger Scruton. From the 30-acre farm in Wiltshire he shares with his young wife, Sophie, 28 years his junior, the flame-haired Scruton launches missiles of disgust against what he sees as the ills of modernity. Single mothers, homosexuals, socialists, feminists, television, popular culture: all find a place in his ministry of contempt.

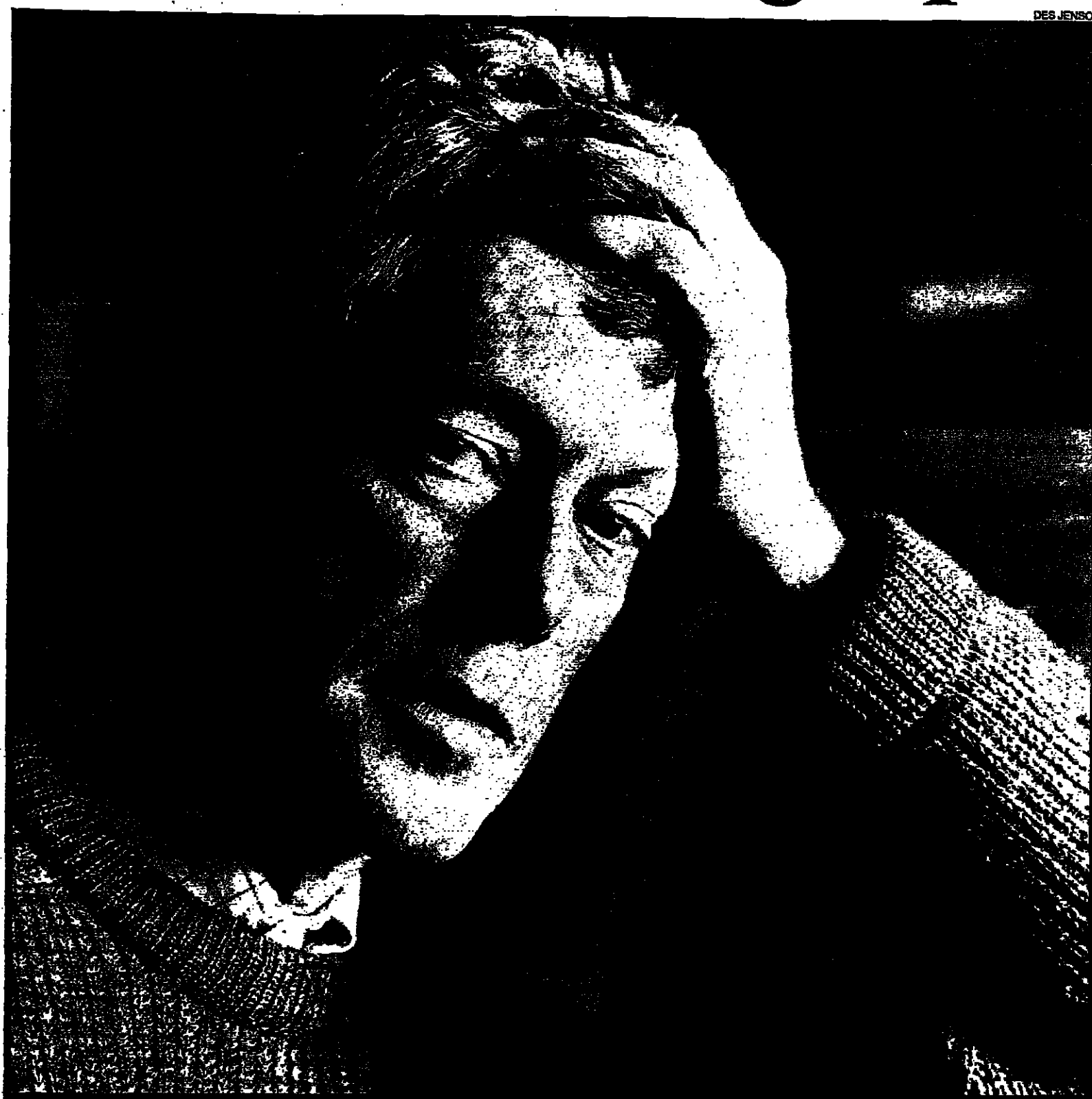
There is considerable humour in Scruton's unashamed fogeyism and reactionary zeal, but others don't always see it that way: he is widely ridiculed and traduced. The writer Ted Honderich calls him the "unthinking man's thinking man". John Haldane, a friend and fellow philosopher, comments on his "juvenile desire to infuriate", while others suggest that he holds views that would not disappoint the most rancid London cabbie. And many have never forgotten his support of Enoch Powell, or his decision in the mid-1980s, as editor of the right-wing *Salisbury Review*, to publish an essay by Ray Honeyford lamenting the orthodoxy of multiculturalism.

Yet there is another, more interesting side that demands attention: he is a philosopher of remarkable range and seriousness. His new book, *The Aesthetics of Music*, is that rare thing: a work of scholarship that mounts a case for the moral significance of music, locating it as a character-forming discipline, and the decline of musical taste as a decline in morals. The work displays all his virtues as a writer: the stylistic virtuosity, the courageous grappling with fundamental questions, the multi-disciplinary learning, the rhetorical flair.

His range and desire to address the ordinary, as well as specialist, reader is important: for many academic philosophers — dry, technical and mired in minutiae — can appear to speak only to themselves. But Scruton has the nerve to be different, the talent to take risks and the courage to rail against received opinion — that, for instance, the abstract nature of music defies meaning.

We meet in the small, untidy two-room flat he sublets from Alan Clark in Albany, Piccadilly, where Scruton, crouched over a huplatie, is frying sausages.

"I have always liked domestic work," he says, striding



"I came back to Cambridge determined to reanimate a political outlook, which involved protecting and preserving things, not destroying them"

across the room. Tall, lean and athletic, he looks younger than his 53 years. He is handsomely dishevelled. His skin is drawn so tightly across his pale face that you could strike a match on his cheekbones.

Last year a newspaper profile of Scruton, 28 years his junior, kept house while Scruton worked in his study. "But," Scruton explains, "it is quite the opposite. I do the cooking, the washing-up and all that, and she works in her study." His expression remains sternly unsmiling. "I'm serious. It's a complete reversal of roles." As if to prove his point, he hands me a plate of sausages, cucumber and warm pitta bread, garnished with an excellent apple chutney he proudly

claims to have made himself. He met Sophie (née Jeffreys, half-sister to the Tory peer Lord Jeffreys), his second wife, while riding with the Beaufort Hunt. Scruton fell off his horse and she stopped to help him. "Sophie has very courteous, old-fashioned manners," he says, dreamily. They married in December last year.

There was an immediate intimacy between them, but their difference in age was a problem. Scruton says: "We are both very romantic people so it took a long time before anything happened. She shares many of my interests, although she is not musical. She reads, but not philosophy. We got to know each other quietly, and realised that despite the age gap, which we

discussed many, many times before making a move in any direction, that we were made for each other. I feel that very strongly. I do hope that we shall have children, and that I will cope as an older father."

Roger Scruton grew up in relative poverty in High Wycombe, son of a Labour-supporting primary school teacher. His parents had no car and could scarcely afford to go on holiday. He cryptically wrote about his boyhood and his late father in a little-read novel, *Francesca*. The narrative is refracted through the experiences of an aspirant provincial boy, Colin, who becomes obsessed with the daughter of the local aristocrat. But Colin, through a quirk of birth, is shut out from the world of upper-class manners he longs to emulate. Yet he retains a romantic attachment to the notion of an older, more patrician England that his father despises.

"There is a lot of my father in that book," Scruton agrees. "He never went very far in life because he never had any real qualifications. My mother, by contrast, was lower middle-class and suburban: there was always class conflict between them of a particularly Lawrentian kind."

Scruton's route out of suburbia was familiar for many of his age and background: grammar school. "I went to a fantastic school, High Wycombe Royal Grammar School, which completely transformed my life. We never had any books at home, yet my school offered me a real education."

He won a science scholarship to Cambridge, but quickly changed to philosophy. After graduating, he taught in France during the student riots of 1968. This was the defining political event of his life. "I found what was happening intellectually disgraceful, and was appalled by the way people were pulling things down, beautiful and carefully made things, and putting nothing in their place. I came back to Cambridge determined to reanimate a political outlook for the modern world, which involved protecting and preserving things, not destroying them."

He was disgusted, too, by the promiscuity and drug culture of the late 1960s — something he experienced through living with a group of "dropout druggies" in Rome. "The house where I stayed was owned by the daughter of a wealthy publisher; she was going through a bad trip and

wanted to move out of her room and into the bathroom. I was happy about this because I needed lodgings. She fell in with some hippies, the Living Theatre, a bunch of anti-Vietnam dropouts from New York. I saw the drug culture thing first-hand, and was sickened by the vaporous boringness of the people."

He concedes, though, that sexual liberation seemed like a good thing. "But as soon as you became seriously involved with someone, and saw the price that you had to pay in terms of jealousy about your partner's past, you realised it wasn't worth it. A relationship clouded by previous ones is unlikely to last."

It was during this period that Scruton met his first wife, Danielle Lafitte.

"It's difficult to talk about all that, but it wasn't very happy..." His voice trails away. Does he regret the failure of an institution in which he believes so strongly? "I'm not sure," he says, sighing. "I was deeply troubled by the whole thing for many years afterwards. It was more than 20 years before I could cope with the idea of marrying again."

How serious is Roger Scruton? The feeling persists among his critics that he is not serious at all; that he has squandered the chance to make an original contribution to philosophy by dissipating his talent across a variety of disciplines without committing himself to any. This has led to charges of dilettantism.

"He is a very interesting thinker," says Haldane. "Most philosophers have neither the ambition nor the aptitude to work, as he does, in more than a single area. But his contribution to philosophy is not what it might have been given his abilities. He has the gift but not the interest to pursue philosophy into its details. There is the problem, too, of what I call this juvenile aspect of his character: he is overly quick with certain opinions, and presents things in unhelpfully polemical ways. Had the ruling orthodoxies of his day been on the Right, I think we might have found him on the Left."

Last year Scruton retired from academic life, his final post being as a Professor of Philosophy at Boston University. He spends most of his time in Wiltshire, writing, riding to hounds and playing the organ at church. He reverses the ritual and ornamentation of religion, but is unable to make that final Kantian leap into faith. "I have a scientific mind; I can't just

The new therapy — painting pots

The latest party accessory is a paintbrush, says Katherine Miller

Move over Ann Summers. Girlie gatherings are no longer about peep-hole bras, but pots, brushes and paint. Jamie Lee Curtis does it. Demi Moore's children are into it and as viewers of *Friends* already know, it's what every babe with a glamorous hairdo does on Monday evenings. It's even provided the backdrop for a recent episode of *Caroline in the City*.

The painting party, where guests decorate pots to their own design, has arrived in Britain from America, where as many as ten studios are opening each week. Customers choose a ready-made earthenware item, paint it and collect it three days later, after it has been glazed and fired by the studio.

What was begun four years ago as a one-off enterprise by a married couple in Los Angeles is now a flourishing franchise business with an estimated 700 American studios. Known in the States as brush and biscuit shops, they get their name from bisque, an unglazed white porcelain. This autumn, Brush'n'Bisque-It, Britain's first pot-painting pad, was opened in Fulham, West London, by the former fashion executive Chantal d'Orthez.

The daughter of the late Vicomte d'Orthez, head of the eponymous French champagne-producing family, she came across the idea in Miami a year ago. "I'd just had a black and white kitchen fitted and couldn't find any ceramics to match. I walked into a biscuit shop and painted a couple of candlesticks. I had so much fun that I went back the next day for more."

Convinced she was on to a winner, d'Orthez set up her own studio in August. She has already received inquiries from potential franchisees in Paris, and this week signed a deal for some 30 outlets to trade under the Brush'n'Bisque-It banner in Australia.

The idea is already gaining a celebrity following over here. Nanette Newman and her grandchildren are regular visitors to d'Orthez's shop. And d'Orthez says her

mother, Moira Lister, the veteran British actress, is one of Brush'n'Bisque-It's greatest fans. "She's putting the word around for me."

Her brainchild is already exciting interest from several City pals. Initially coy, they are now, to her amusement, reaching for their chequebooks. "At the beginning I was small fry to these boys. Now I intend to build up my empire."

However, financial gain is not the only benefit the repeated refrain heard one evening above the wine-induced giggles emanating from a party of well-spoken thirtysomething women was "Therapy, therapy, it's our therapy for the week."

The mother of two young daughters, d'Orthez also makes the studio available for children's birthday parties, bravely accommodating up to 30 kids at a time. Parents are discouraged from interfering, with highly imaginative results. "I don't hear a peep out of the children for two hours. I just let them go for broke," says d'Orthez. Painting completed, each little artist leaves with his or her own painted piece, a relief for parents who find themselves at a loss when it comes to providing going-home presents.

Large groups should book in advance, but many individuals simply wander in off the street, curious to see what goes on in the studio that d'Orthez commissioned from Peter Howitt and Clive Ross, the award-winning designers of the set for *Roger Rabbit*.

"I wanted something theatrical and bold, to give people ideas," she explains. "So many people come in here and say 'I haven't painted since O level', but each time they come, their ideas flow and their pieces get bigger and bigger."

Running her own show is a big step for d'Orthez, who tired of "the corporate-world bit" after working as head of fashion marketing for Marks & Spencer in South Africa. Above all, she says: "This is a much more satisfying way to earn a living than sending out 25 inter-office memos every time you want a decision."

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Put the local back into government

Councils may spend more if they deliver more, says John Prescott

Too often in the past two decades, central government in Whitehall seemed to be waging war on local government in town halls. When Labour was elected on May 1, we declared it was time to bury the hatchet. Whatever difficulties we faced — financial, social or environmental — we would face them together with local government, regardless of the party in charge in any particular town hall.

Yesterday I announced the Government's proposals for local authority finance in the coming financial year. Overall, we propose that councils in England can spend an extra £1.78 billion on services — a rise of 3.5 per cent.

The last Government's spending plans implied a council tax increase of 7 per cent. By keeping within spending limits, that is the legacy we inherit. But actual council taxes in individual authorities will vary considerably, and we expect authorities to give full weight to what their taxpayers can afford. By providing an extra £835 million funding for education, we will relieve the pressure on councils.

This settlement is a bit more than many people expected. It is good news particularly for schools, schoolchildren and parents, because the help we are giving to education reflects everyone's top priority.

In Government, we face hard choices and finance is one of them. Everyone knows that we

promised to stick to the spending limits set by the last Government for this year and next, for the sake of the economy. But, within that constraint, we have a new and positive agenda. We want local government to thrive and to be reinvigorated. We want local people to become involved, to vote, to take part, to influence — not just to use the services. And we want local government to be accountable and responsive.

I have told councils that they may spend more; this is not to permit them to be irresponsible, but to allow them to be responsive to their voters. I have also said, very clearly, that however much they propose to spend, they must consider whether local taxpayers can afford it. This is not an opportunity to return to the days of spiralling local taxes. The more responsible councils are, the easier it will be to progress to the removal of capping in the next year or so.

This week we will confirm the successful applicants for pilot schemes to try out proposals for obtaining best value in council services. The tried old approach of forcing councils to offer their services to outside contractors has not worked — too much time was spent on bureaucracy and not enough on the real aim, which is providing quality services at a price local taxpayers are willing to pay.

The question which should be at the heart of all government is this: how best can we ensure the quality of life people deserve? We want

councils to focus wholeheartedly on that.

Yesterday I also announced that the way local government resources are allocated is being changed in order to reflect a fairer distribution throughout the country. The old social and economic indices ranked leafy Kingston upon Thames as having the same level of disadvantage as embattled Barnsley — an obvious nonsense that we have tackled. A guest at the Ritz, although a welcome visitor to London, will no longer be treated in local government finance terms as if he or she is a deprived local resident in a council block. We are also ensuring a better distribution of services, providing more resources for education, community care and the fire services.

Last week Lord Hunt of Tanworth introduced a Bill which will allow councils to experiment with different forms of democratic structure. We support these proposals. Hilary Armstrong, Minister for Local Government, is in the middle of a series of seminars being held with councils, the voluntary sector, businesses and other opinion formers, debating how we can encourage greater participation in local government.

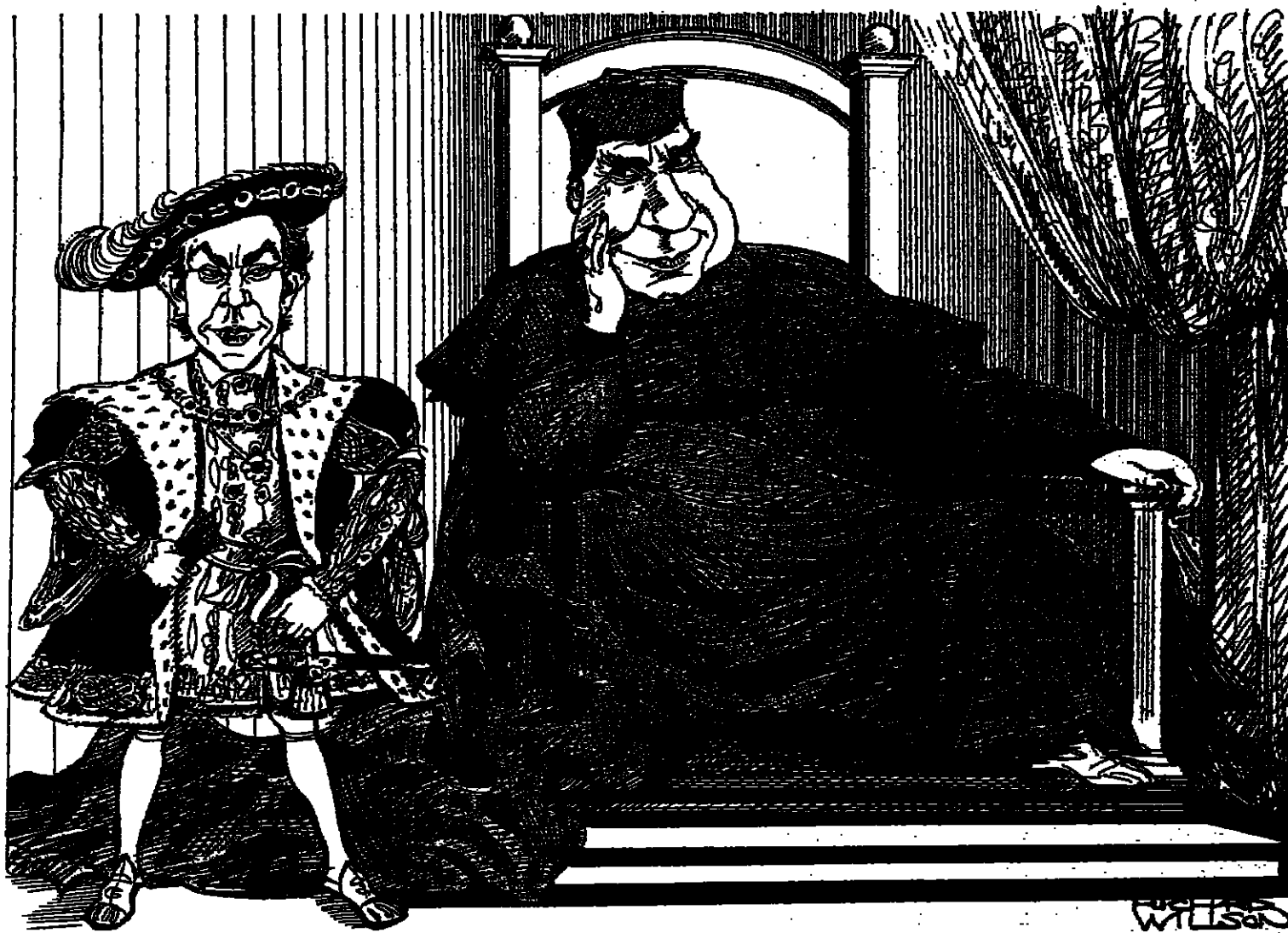
We are talking about the possibility of electing mayors directly, making decision-making more accountable, and sharpening up the scrutiny of those decisions. We are also considering ways of encouraging young people to become involved, as well as tapping in to minority communities.

This month we will start to consult on different aspects of local government and we plan a White Paper next year. The White Paper will also include proposals on local government electoral reform. In parallel, a Home Office group will consider other steps to improve the turnout in elections; for example, can we move the traditional Thursday voting day to one more suited to modern needs? Would it be possible to vote electronically, perhaps even in the local supermarket, without having to visit a polling station?

Over the past seven months, relations between central and local government have improved considerably. We have been working with, and will continue to work with, the Local Government Association; Cabinet colleagues and I have already met them twice to discuss such issues as a better deal for lone parents and Welfare to Work.

We believe in local government. It is an aim of the Labour Party's constitution to empower people to take decisions locally. This year and the next will be tough financially. But we have taken the first steps to reinvigorate local democracy and restore a proper relationship between central and local government.

The author is Deputy Prime Minister.



Irvine's cardinal error

The Lord Chancellor may fancy himself a Wolsey — but Brown holds the purse strings

Any fool can see what is happening. We are back in 1520. The Lord Chancellor thinks he is Cardinal Wolsey. The Prime Minister cuts a dash as the young Henry VIII. A Field of the Cloth of Gold is prepared for Britain's European presidency next year. England is to stand proud with the finest of France, Rome and the Habsburgs, truly a force at the heart of Europe, its court the marvel of the world. Oh, the splendour of it all. And even Dame Hubris is silent, save for the occasional roar of a racing car.

Lord Irvine of Lairg says he was joking when he compared himself to Wolsey. We would have laughed had there not been an apse in the reference. His lordship is not yet Archbishop of York, Bishop of Lincoln, Bishop of Winchester and papal legate. But he must be patient. So it was in jest that he told the Ref in Club that he admired Wolsey's role in "encompassing politics, religion, the economy and even military affairs". As for his liking for the discretionary Star Chamber Court, we shall treat it as passing wit.

As for his lordship's boasted relationship with his pupil and master, Tony Blair, it is simple truth. He may despise the pettiness of his fellow ministers and mean to use the Great Seal to stop them "feuding". But they are a second-rate bunch. He wants to oversee a constitutional change that is "the most ambitious and wide-ranging in Britain this century". Don't we all? Besides, Lord Irvine is building at public expense a new Hampton Court "au bord de la rivière" at Westminster. His wallpaper alone cost £60,000. A man's ambitions must be a match for his wallpaper.

Lord Irvine is clearly deaf to the fate of his illustrious predecessor. Yet there is another Chancellor at the court of King Tony. Gordon Brown may lack the glamour of a Wolsey, not to mention the wallpaper of an Irvine, but he overreaches them both in power.

Mr Brown has no Great Seal but he has the Great Budget. Whatever Lord Irvine thinks he is doing, Mr Brown actually does. Whatever Lord Irvine proposes, Mr Brown disposes. Lord Irvine may sit on a thousand committees, but his seat is stuffed with wool. Mr Brown's seat is stuffed with cash.

With characteristic modesty, Lord Irvine pointed out that four of his predecessors were created saints. He went on to discuss his forthcoming

legal aid reforms. After years of Treasury complaints about the runaway legal aid budget, the Lord Chancellor's Department has finally cracked. It is about to abandon civil legal aid in favour of "no win, no fee" agreements. Civil aid has been a lawyer's sinecure to rank with the most luxurious of monastic houses. Mr Brown has had enough. He is dissolving it. He wants the money, and Lord Irvine's fat fingers are out on their butts, to earn their bread in the woods and fields.

All the Lord Chancellor's saintliness, all his Committees and Seals, his Woolsacks, wands, silk, wall-paper, silk and ermine will not save his friends. An entire profession, that of civil law, is being transformed by executive fiat from offering impartial advice for a fee to being an entrepreneurial business. The incentive to profit will not be the quality of legal advice but the wealth of the opposing litigant or his insurer. To save the Treasury money, the cost of law will soar. The reason is simply that the Lord Chancellor's Department has not devised a way of rationing legal aid in civil cases. The Treasury is chucking out a most important welfare state principle, that of helping the poor to justice, with the bathwater of uncontrolled spending.

Slowly the character of the new Government is emerging from the past six months' presentational fog. Its instinct to centralism, above all its concentration of power on Nos 10 and 11 Downing Street, is identical to that of the last Government. Lord Irvine may dream of recovering a role long ceded by his department to others. He may inveigh against feuding departments and seek devolution. He may long for a role at a place that he variously calls the "cusp", the "interface" and the "chief conduit" of government. But these are dreams of grandeur, the fantasies of a committee man, not of a potent politician. He may be a friend of power but he is essentially an outsider. Eliot's attendant prince, one that will do to swell a progress, start a scene or two.

Power lies with Mr Brown. Labour's most crucial decision in Opposition, ardently advocated by Mr Brown, was to keep to the old Tory spending targets. There might be squeezes here and relief there, but continuity was the rule. Mr Blair thereby gave himself a discipline over Cabinet and followers unknown to such spendthrifts as Harold Wilson in 1964 and Margaret Thatcher in 1979. He also delegated real political power to Mr Brown, to determine any variants in Treasury targets that he felt the (Conservative) budget could sustain. While Mr Blair trips the light fantastic toe round the world's photo-opportunities, it is Mr Brown who burns the midnight oil. Mr Brown's patronage must be courted by eager colleagues. The Treasury holds the keys to the door of ministerial glory.

Thus it was Mr Brown who helped David Blunkett and Frank Dobson with a little extra for schools and hospitals last summer. It was Mr Brown who seized the National Lottery and is tearing up its "arm's length" distribution system. He has acquired what the lottery was never meant to be, a straight levy on a nationalised gaming monopoly. The Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, has to do the dirty work of defending his decision on single mothers' allowances. He announces the pill-sugaring, the gifts to after-school clubs, community projects, fitness centres and lone parent playgroups.

At the weekend the Government acted to protect the cash for this benign centralism. It said it would ban rival "good cause" lotteries such as Pronto, launched last Saturday. There is no reason why the State should have a monopoly of big-prize lotteries. Pronto is to be banned on the ground that it might cause gambling addiction, a consideration that applies equally to the Treasury's Camelot scratchcards. But Mr Brown is no fool. He gets the plaudits for the lottery playgroups, and does not want Pronto muddling in. Nor has he been idle in Lord

Irvine's chosen territory of constitutional reform. Mr Brown fought to keep the Welsh and Scottish grant formulas under central control. He is fighting to prevent the London mayor and assembly from having an independent source of revenue. If John Prescott wants to give London's new government money from road tolls, parking charges, fines or residents' discs, the Treasury will define that money as a tax, and either bag it or ban it. To Mr Brown the only good tax is one which the Treasury receives and he can be credited with spending. It was so under the Tories. It is so under new Labour.

Yesterday the environment team was sent out to defend Mr Brown's refusal to honour the manifesto pledge to end the central capping of local taxes. The pledge arose from (old) Labour's resistance to Margaret Thatcher's war on local government. "Local decision-making," said the manifesto, "should be less constrained by central government and more accountable to local people." But not yet. The nobility of Opposition is forgotten amid the seductions of power.

Yesterday in the Commons, and on this page today, the Environment Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott refuses to promise an end to rate-capping, the single most outrageous offence against local democracy in Britain. Already Oxfordshire and Somerset have been rate-capped to meet Treasury spending targets. They are hardly militant left-wingers. Deep down, the present Government trusts the electorate no more than did the last.

Wolsey would have roared with laughter. He would take this band of scoundrels to his heart. He knew not to trust the territorial barons when it came to money. Like the Treasury, he would treat the fact that today's barons are elected by the people as prima-facie evidence of venality. What can commoners understand of the interest of the realm?

Yet both Lord Irvine and Mr Brown have one advantage over Cardinal Wolsey. They know what became of him. There is one man whom no Chancellor dare outshine, one higher sun in the firmament of power. He must always be appeased. "Run up another palace, Sir Terence. Only the best cloth of gold for the French. And look at my calf, Gordon, how well it is turned." And Irvine, look, your Mistress Boleyn. Is she not fair?

Alan Coren



Count on all those Wongs to make me write

Today is a very big day for me. It is the last time I shall use the word Crickiehood. That is because there are 1.6 billion Chinese about this planet, and none of them can pronounce it. It is also the last time I shall get off a cheap crack at Chinese pronunciation.

I have taken this momentous decision because I wish to get on the right side of Gordon Brown. It is the only side to be on: there is nothing for me on the left side of Gordon Brown, since I am neither young enough to qualify for a childcare club nor old enough to qualify for a subsidised gasfire, but while that is just about all there is on Mr Brown's left side, his right side is a goldmine, and, with a bit of luck, I could soon find myself sitting on it.

Any moment now I could become a creative industrialist, because Mr Brown not only wants me to go into industry, he wants industry to go into me. He said so in his thrilling pre-Budget statement. He said he was eager for the creative arts to become a major plank of economic policy. That is why he is setting up a Creative Industries Taskforce, to chuck a billion lottery pounds at artists applying for grants from a brand new fund called Nesta. She is the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, and, even as I type, I feel her presence hovering by my screen. I can smell her gravy.

In order to dip my bread in it, however, I shall have to do my part. I can no longer sit here banging stuff out for the domestic market, since that will never enrol me as a plank in our economic policy; what Gordon Brown wants is for me to become an international player, he wants me to commend myself irresistibly to overseas buyers, he wants me to bring foreign currency rolling in. He wants me to write exports.

Not easy, in my game. Were I a Parker or a Minghella, a Hirst or a Hockney, a Spice or a Gallagher, a Riverdancer or a Sleep, a Corbin or a Foster, a Rattle or a Birtwistle, a Ken or an Emma, then the world would be my oyster; it would beat a path to my door, as only an oyster can, and it would be bearing big fat pearls, for me and for Gordon. But I do not spout film or slice sheep, I neither sing music nor dance to it, I do not design or conduct or compose or act, I do not, in short, engage in any of those industrial processes fortunate enough to transcend frontiers by speaking the common language of all humankind. I sit in a loft in the marginal parish of Crickiehood and engage in an industrial process unfortunate enough to transcend nowhere by speaking a language which daily grows less common even to those for whom it was designed.

You wouldn't believe how grim, after the Chinese, we set down this made-me. It wasn't merely the matter of disqualification from Nesta's largesse, it was also the matter of not being able to march behind Mr Brown towards the broad sunny uplands of economic triumph. How I wanted to play my part in creating the New Britain, attracting, by my industry, huge sackfuls of foreign cash to shorten waiting lists, fund schools, build homes, and make the trains run on time. But what international demand could there be for a Crickiehood wag?

And thus the melancholy days passed — until it was time for one of them to be Sunday, or, as it subsequently became, yesterday. The day, as you will instantly have calculated, before my very big day; and the day which made my very big day the way it is. For it was on Sunday that, as I listlessly turned the nonsense snippet which hurled me instantaneously from that listlessness. Did you perhaps see it, too? Did you also learn that English is now understood by one Chinese in ten? And did you work out how many Chinese that is?

It is the answer to a wage's prayer, that's how many it is. As soon as she has moved in behind her till, I shall ask Nesta for my grubstake. It will take the form of a ticket to Beijing, and the lease on a loft in one of its marginal suburbs, where I shall wait for marginal things to happen to me, for them all down as waggishly as I am able, and when enough have been jotted so cobbly into a book, I'll copy a copy to each and every one of China's 1.6 billion clamouring Anglophones. Then I shall come back home again, with a posy, whistle to my lip, a parrot on my shoulder, and a dicky-bar full of cash for Mr Brown.

Jimmy riddle

SIR JIMMY GOLDSMITH is being taunted by Brussels beyond the grave. His European HQ has just been bulldozed by builders working for the European Parliament. The entire contents of the fully operational office — filing cabinets, secret reports, a portrait of Jimmy — now lie under rubble. Blithely, the European Parliament insists that it was a mistake. Eurocrats who tipped up for a meeting were staggered as they searched through dust for documents. They fear foul play. Moving MEPs into the new building, dubbed Caprice des Dieux (the Folly of the Gods) and part of a £1.2 billion redevelopment, has been a fiasco. The Belgian authorities have begun a criminal investigation into alleged corruption in awarding contracts for the new Parliament buildings.

So why was it bulldozed? An internal inquiry revealed that builders had worked from the wrong plans. Among those unimpressed is his old mucker John Aspinall. "I bet the builders enjoyed themselves. Sir James was a torpedo who wanted to wreck the Euro bureaucracy and now they have destroyed his legacy."

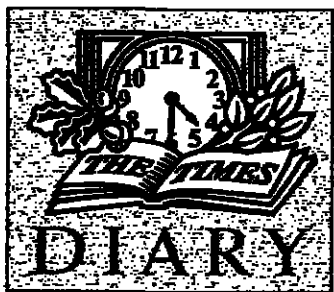
Sloe burn

STALWARTS of the Cavalry and Guards club gulped their sloe gins this week as they spotted a Sinn Féin MP saunter in. The club was the favourite watering hole of Ian



Old pals: Goldsmith, Aspinall

Gow, the Tory MP murdered by the IRA in 1990. Caoimhghin O Caolain joined a little get-together on Tuesday as guest of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body. Buoyed by meeting earlier Northern Ireland Secretaries Marilyn Rees and Peter Brooke, O Caolain passed two guardsmen in full regalia and drank under watchful portraits of retired British generals. "He looked rather uncomfortable, and he didn't stay long," said one



hurrumphing member. "Daniel in the Lion's Den."

Gow used to haul MPs there for "a bowl of sherry", and left its Benevolent Fund £1,000. Normally the club is discerning about whom it lets in. It spurned James Hewitt.

PROMISING news for theatre-land. The ennobled tunesmith Lord Lloyd-Webber has put down a written question asking "Her Majesty's Government whether it will seek to end activities which cause noise pollution".

Fade out

DAVID PUTNAM's film career has reached its final cut. The ambitious Labour peer is folding up his producer's chair to concentrate on his campaign to become a big but-
ton in the BBC. As recently as July,

the man who brought us *Chariots of Fire* was burning to produce three exciting new films. "My movie days are declining. I doubt that I can juggle the two careers," he says. "I have just finished a lovely film called *My Life So Far*, which will come out next year, and that could be it."

Before the election there was talk of Lord Putnam becoming Culture Secretary. For now, it is believed, he would settle for being deputy chairman of the BBC. A Labour peer will be required to fill the vacancy early next year. The job is within Tony Blair's gift. And Blair likes Lord Putnam. Simple.



"Humm, looks like snow"

AFTER welcoming Baroness Thatcher and other right-wing lions into No 10, Tony Blair is circumspect about greeting Newt Gingrich, US House Speaker, who arrives in London today. The PM will meet the hardman at his Commons office — far more discreet than Downing Street.

Polo mint

SUSAN BARRANTES, the Duchess of York's mother, is teaming up with Peter Cadbury, big in chocolate, to offer polo lessons in Argentina and Britain. Mrs Barrantes — who, I gather, is called Granny II by her grand-daughters, Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie, because their other granny is the Queen — had looked into setting up a polo school with her late husband Hector at their ranch, El Pucara. "Peter's family has a beautiful estate in Oxfordshire so we can organise exchanges," she says. A pukka plan.

LAETITIA MAKLOUF wants to make babies. To prove her point she will appear on a Channel 4 documentary, *The Myth of Too Many*, which debunks the Malthusian view that we will be overrun by the pater of tiny feet. She will appear as a surreal continuity woman sprawled across a grand



Baby talk: Laetitia Maklouf

piano singing Making Whoopee, à la Michelle Pfeiffer in *The Fabulous Baker Boys*. "Everyone should produce as many children as possible because it's fun," gushes Laetitia, who trundles a tea urn for her day job. "Friends want to own conglomerates, but having children is more difficult. You have to find a husband first." No applications via here, please.

JASPER GERARD

مكتبة الأمل



IN A CLOUD

Where historic freedoms for press and people are threatened

A weakness common among persons of strong intellect and wide interests is a conviction that because they are right about many things, they are right about everything. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, both understands many areas of public life and has refreshing ideas about them. He does not, however, understand the dangers in statutory control of the press.

On the evidence of his own words, he has not understood why and how a clause of the Human Rights Bill now before Parliament could constrict both the freedom of the press in this country and the avenues of redress against abuses of that freedom which are now widely and freely open to all. Because he appears not even to recognise that a problem exists, he has resisted amendments to the Bill that could diminish that risk.

The Prime Minister and other members of the Government do understand. They recognise that newspapers are privately owned institutions which fulfil a historic role as a free watchdog over the public interest. They are equally clear about their purpose in incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights, which is to make it easier for British citizens to seek legal redress in this country's courts against abuses of power by the State and the public bodies which act in its name. Lord Irvine by contrast, so clear about so many things, is here in a cloud.

The heart of the problem is the conflict in the Convention between Article 10, which with various qualifications lays down the right "to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority", and Article 8, which sets out "the right to respect for privacy". When there is conflict between these ideals, who decides? If the courts make the decisions, the effect of incorporation will be — contrary to the Government's reiterated intention — to introduce a law of privacy and impede the investigation of abuses of power.

Until recently, the Cabinet has been convinced, on Lord Irvine's advice, that this could not be the case because the Bill had no bearing on private bodies such as the media. In this respect the critical section of the Bill is Clause 6, which makes it "unlawful for a public authority to act in a way which is incompatible with one or more of the Convention rights".

This wording already gives cause for concern. The phrase "one or more" could invite a court judgment based on only one of the rights laid down in the Convention. That could free a judge of the requirement, for example, to strike a balance between freedom of information and the right to privacy. We accept that this is not the intention of Lord Irvine, who insists that the courts will be required to give freedom of expression "its due high value". But the Government has yet to accept Lord Simon of Glaisdale's amendment removing this ambiguity. It should do so.

There is even greater ambiguity about whether a "public authority" is restricted to institutions with clear statutory functions, such as government bureaucracies and the courts themselves, or whether it net spreads wider. As drafted, the list is inclusive and embraces "any person certain of whose functions are of a public nature". When he introduced the Bill last month, Lord Irvine took the view that this did not cover either newspapers or the Press Complaints Commission (PCC). This independent body, currently chaired by Lord Wakeham and set up and funded by newspapers, oversees the self-regulation of the press and takes up complaints from the public.

The Lord Chancellor has now changed his mind and affirmed in the House of Lords that "the press might well be held to be a function of a public nature" within the meaning of the Act. PCC rulings would thus be open to court challenge, and newspapers would be subject to interim injunctions, on privacy grounds, that could delay publication for years. These would offer the powerful and those who would abuse their power many new and wide opportunities to impede investigative journalism.

Although Lord Irvine has changed his mind, he is currently not disposed to alter the Bill. He dismisses as of little consequence

the argument that this would introduce a privacy law by the back door. He argues that a judge-made law of privacy is developing regardless of incorporation. That may be so. But it is no ground for framing such a law, and speeding its growth, as an unintended by-product of this legislation. He is unsympathetic to Lord Wakeham's argument that to bring the PCC within the scope of the Bill would harm the interests of ordinary people. He claims that the press should welcome the "good news" as an incentive to "strengthen" its system of self-regulation — including empowering the PCC to impose fines.

This is the language of Orwell. This good news is bad news. Fines and other so-called strengthenings, which include proposals of a purely lay PCC that excluded press representatives, would be weakenings. They would destroy the combination of practicality and consensus that are the current system's strength. The PCC's official status would then, Lord Irvine claims, make the courts less inclined to intervene. Since they would not otherwise have had the power to do so, this is chopped logic; and it betrays a deep misunderstanding of the point of self-regulation and the way in which it works.

For most people, going to law is so ruinously expensive that it is out of the question. For them, the Press Complaints Commission is the only practical avenue to obtain satisfaction when they feel that a newspaper has intruded on their privacy, published an untruth or been unfair and has failed to respond to their complaints. The PCC, a mixed committee of editors and laymen, has no legal powers and can impose no fines. It is less a regulator than a conciliator. In the great majority of cases, it succeeds. The newspapers which subscribe to it bind themselves to respect a PCC ruling that they have broken the industry's voluntary code of practice, to make amends by printing its judgment, apologising or publishing corrections or balancing articles.

This system of redress works because it is voluntary. Lord Irvine is too seasoned a lawyer to believe that newspapers will readily concede that they have been wrong if to do so would open them up to subsequent court cases or financial penalties. They would be far more likely to tell complainants to take them to court. The rich might well do so; the rest could not. The proposed "no win, no fee" system would be little help, because few cases, above all of intrusions into privacy, are so clear-cut that they would stand a sufficient prospect of winning their case.

There is still time for Tony Blair and Chris Smith, the Secretary for Culture, Media and Sport, to provide a remedy. The Cabinet is now aware of the unintended consequences of this Bill. Its members should listen to Lord Wakeham, whose concern is the same as theirs — to help the people of this country to protect their rights as laid down by the Convention — and build in the necessary safeguards. Statements intended to guide the courts as to Parliament's intentions, however strong and even if uttered by the Prime Minister, will be helpful, but not sufficient. Judges may draw on what has been said in Parliament when interpreting the law; but they are not obliged to do so.

The one safe course is to exclude the PCC and the media from the purview of the Act. The Government should then explicitly include an affirmation of the public interest in freedom of information in the Freedom of Information Bill to be published next year. Lord Irvine may well be right that these two small safeguards will not impede the development of a judge-made privacy law, building on existing laws of confidence, protection from harassment and trespass. But this would be an evolutionary process which Parliament could and should watch, as will the Press.

Even if it is amended in this way, the Human Rights Bill will shift the balance between Parliament and the courts, to an extent that may take some years to become evident. That is all the more reason to act decisively to prevent it from restricting, right from the start and as if by accident, freedoms that have for centuries distinguished this country in the world.

THE ROBINSON PLAN

Less pain for some savers, pain and irritation for others

Labour no longer taxes the rich simply for fun or from envy. But under today's New Austerity, the well-off can no longer expect to keep tax breaks that have little rational justification. Yesterday they discovered that their tax-free savings were to be capped in the interests of persuading poorer people to invest. Their Peps may squeak, but the existing regime is hard to defend.

Nearly half the adult population has no savings at all. Yet today's workers will not be able to rely on the welfare state to underwrite their old age. People on low incomes have so far been deterred from using tax-free saving schemes such as Peps and Tassas because they seemed too complicated, too risky or too rigid. Peps, which have to be invested in shares, are not suitable for those who can only spare the odd £10 at a time. Tassas, which are interest-bearing accounts, tie the saver's money up for five years. Issas, by contrast, can be very simple: up to £1,000 a year can be put in an interest-bearing account, with none of the risks that stock market investment carries. A further £4,000 can be invested in shares or bonds. They will also be flexible, since the money can be taken out at any time.

The Government hopes to double the number of people with tax-free savings accounts to 12 million. If people who have never saved before begin to learn the habit, they may find the prospect of starting a stakeholder pension less daunting.

About 10 per cent of existing Pep holders have holdings of more than £50,000. They will certainly have to pay more tax, and such a change will not be welcome. But Peps were introduced to encourage both wider share ownership and savings. Those couples who already have £100,000 in Peps between them hardly need such an incentive.

The irritation will have been exacerbated yesterday by the minister chosen to preside over the launch, Geoffrey Robinson, the multimillionaire Paymaster General, who has just been exposed as a beneficiary of an offshore trust designed to avoid British tax. This man works for a Chancellor who has openly decried such tax avoidance measures. For him to tell savers who have kept their money in Britain that they should be penalised was hypocritical in the extreme. If Labour wants to make the middle classes suffer further, it could learn to serve the pain in a more sensitive way.

Search for fairness through a national minimum wage

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

From Mr John Healey, MP for Wentworth (Labour)

Sir, While unions have been in the forefront of arguments for a minimum wage for many years, the new legislation is not about the interests of trade unions. Only one in ten of those earning less than £4 an hour is in a union and the vast majority of those who will gain from a minimum wage are not trade union members.

So much for your statement (leading article, November 28) that the national minimum wage rate Bill reveals the Prime Minister and his team as "the slaves of some defunct trade unionist".

You also raise concerns about possible impact on jobs by citing DTI estimates that 1.8 million jobs may be lost under a minimum wage. That figure, prepared for the previous Government, assumes that half of all those employed in the UK would maintain their present differential with the lowest-paid workers and that the only adjustment employers would make to a minimum wage is to cut jobs. Unsurprisingly, this wild estimate has been very widely dismissed, including by the CBI.

While the economic cycles in most other European Union states are out of sync with Britain's, as at present, you could more usefully have examined the US — which is, after all, the model that many who might oppose a minimum wage eye with envy and wish to emulate — where unemployment last month was 4.7 per cent. The US minimum wage is \$5.15 (£3.49).

at the purchasing power parity exchange rate).

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HEALEY,
House of Commons,
November 28.

From Mr H. F. Harrie

Sir, Why does the Government want to introduce legal constraints upon voluntarily agreed contracts of employment? If the prospective employee doesn't believe that he will be better off if he accepts the job, he doesn't have to accept it. If he does believe that he will be better off, then why should the Government stop him?

If it is right that everyone deserves at least a minimum amount of money to live on, whether they can find a job that will provide it or not, then taxation must be used to fund a benefit system that will achieve this without the positive disincentives to work associated with the present system.

Yours faithfully,
H. F. HARTE,
Leafield, Dunsells Lane,
Ropley, Hampshire,
November 28.

From the Minister of State,
Department of Trade and Industry

Sir, The national minimum wage is not about the appeasement of so-called "ghosts of Labour past", as you allege.

Sensibly set, it will help achieve our twin goals — to end poverty and help industry provide skilled and pro-

ductive jobs — and it will bring the scandal of poverty pay to a richly deserved end. Rates of £1.82 an hour for a security guard and less than £100 per week for a garage attendant working a 40-hour week are simply unacceptable in this day and age.

The minimum wage, which is an integral part of our campaign to move people off welfare and into work, will provide a universal floor for pay. It will encourage competition on quality and productivity; it will promote work incentives; and it will provide people with the skills and opportunities to move into work.

That is why the principle is supported by all sectors of industry, and by employers and employees alike.

Yours etc,
IAN MCCARTNEY,
Department of Trade and Industry,
1 Victoria Street, SW1,
November 28.

From Mr David Baker

Sir, In today's leading article on the minimum wage you raise the question of how often the rate is to be raised and on what basis.

One basis that must not be used is by comparison with the average wage. By imposing a minimum wage the average wage is automatically raised and a spiral of continually raised minimum wage is set in motion.

Yours sincerely,
D. T. BAKER,
Hollyhocks,
9 Larkfield Road, Farnham, Surrey,
November 28.

able housing trust. It consists of elderly married couples and widows living in sheltered housing whose occupational pensions and, in some cases, savings just remove them from any entitlement to housing benefit. Yet leave them struggling to pay the enormous "affordable" rents — £60-plus a week — charged by most sheltered schemes. Their neighbours on income support receive housing benefit for all but the heating element of the rent and, if they are prudent, can on occasion afford to go on a Saga holiday.

My "real poor" would love to be sent that £50 Christmas heating bonus.

Yours etc,
JOHN FIGGERSALD,
68 Heworth Village, York,
November 27.

From Mr Geoffrey Bremner

Sir, I suggest that pensioners who feel uncomfortable about receiving an extra £20 (not to speak of the extra £10) which they don't really need might like to send it to one of the charities concerned with the aged.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY BREMNER,
Gillmour House,
Blennerhasset, Carlisle, Cumbria,
November 27.

Zimbabwe land seizure

From Mr Gerald D. Slessenger

Sir, I read with some sadness of Mr Mugabe's plan to seize land in Zimbabwe, mainly from white farmers (report, November 29). His justification appears to be the old scapegoat of "colonialism", and I understand he requested funds from the British Government to reimburse those whose land he intends to seize.

May I ask whether he would therefore consider reimbursing the British people for the millions of pounds invested in Zimbabwe during colonial days, in terms of railways, buildings, roads, telephones, etc. all of which are being used by Zimbabweans today?

It seems to me that if Tony Blair wished to seize land rightfully belonging to others in this country there would be an uproar. Surely the rules of democracy must be applied with equality, or is Zimbabwe not a democracy after all?

Yours faithfully,
G. SLESSENGER,
22 South Drive, Cheam, Surrey,
December 1.

A trade revived?

From Miss Denise Haylor

Sir, I read with interest your report of November 29 on the unearthing of ochre pigment in the Clearwell caves near Coleford in Gloucestershire.

I visited these caves some seven years ago and discovered from the samples of warm yellow ochre which I obtained there that the paint was ideally suited in colour and character to the restoration of a stone-coloured interior of a listed building.

Perhaps a number of our quarries and remaining mines that can produce ochre as a by-product of their industry might consider reviving this historic trade.

Yours faithfully,
DENISE HAYLOR,
(Historic interiors adviser),
Dallington House,
3 Avenue Road, Staines, Middlesex,
November 29.

Business letters, page 29

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Tobacco adverts — a threat to young

From Professor David Baum,
President of the Royal College of
Paediatrics and Child Health,
and others

Sir, The majority of adults who smoke start in adolescence. Cigarette smoking among girls and boys is significantly influenced by advertising. Smoking during pregnancy has a profoundly deleterious effect on the unborn child and her/his subsequent development. Cigarette smoking is the major cause of avoidable ill-health and premature death created in the 20th century. All this is well known.

For these reasons, on behalf of the children and young people of the UK, we urge the Government to turn its back on sponsorship of Formula One motor racing, take the lead at the forthcoming EU Council of Health Ministers and secure a directive imposing a comprehensive ban on all tobacco advertising and promotion.

At the birth of the 21st century, this would indeed be *le grand prix*.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID BAUM,
President, Royal College of
Paediatrics and Child Health,
JACKIE CARNELL,
Director, The Community Practitioners
and Health Visitors Association,
DAVID ELLIMAN,
Convener, British Association for
Community Child Health,
PHILIP GRAHAM,
Chair, The National Children's Bureau,
CHRISTINE HANCOCK,
General Secretary,
Royal College of Paediatrics and
Child Health,
50 Hallam Street, W1,
December 1.

Laser pens

From Mr Chandra P. de Fonseka

Sir, Professor John Marshall of Moorfields Eye Hospital says that the worst that could happen if a laser pen was shone into the eye, was "a very temporary loss of vision, followed by a few minutes when the eyesight became disorientated", without permanent damage to the eye (report, November 24).

If a driver was going at 20mph, unless he stopped immediately, the vehicle could travel 586 yards during each minute that vision was so affected. On a busy suburban road the likelihood of serious involvement with other road users would be considerably increased. I do not think the hazard posed by these pens should be lightly dismissed.

Yours faithfully,
C. P. DE FONSEKA,
(Senior Research Fellow,
Road Accident Research Unit,
University of Birmingham, 1967-69),
10 Glendevon Road,
Whitchurch, Bristol,
November 27.

Long road home

From Mrs Fabienne Smith

Sir, When the Post Office traced the Reverend David H. van Daalen (letter, December 1) I suspect they were greatly helped by the rarity of his name. Yet when I lived in a Banffshire fishing barge 40 years ago, with Smith as one of its frequently recurring family names, a letter addressed to "Mrs Smith, Findochy" came straight to me.

I asked the postman how he knew it was mine. He said: "It was from London. Who else could it be for?"

Yours sincerely,
FABIENNE SMITH,
55 Manor Place, Edinburgh 3,
December 1.

From Dr M. A. Swift

Sir, As a student at Bristol during the Seventies I lived in a bus. I received post mailed to: The yellow coach. Opposite the public toilets, Alma Road, Clifton, Bristol. The postman obliged by leaving mail underneath the windscreen wiper.

Yours faithfully,
M. A. SWIFT,
Little Orchard, School Lane,
Ewshot, nr Farnham, Surrey,
December 1.

From Mr Robert Vincent

Sir, There is yet another idiosyncratic aspect of addressing letters, in that they are written in the reverse order of the sequence which enables them to be delivered.

Sensibly the Post Office reads the letters we receive from the bottom up. The first line is really the last consideration. And that, as they confusingly say, is "the bottom line".

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT VINCENT,
Dilly House,
Wildern, Andover, Hampshire,
December 2.

Spirit of Christmas

From Mrs Margaret Kaplan

Sir, I overheard this warm, seasonal exchange in a shop at a crowded Christmas-card counter. Impatient husband to dithering wife: "For God's sake, it's only for your mother."

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET KAPLAN,
49 Prestbury Road,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire,
December 1.

OBITUARIES

BIG DADDY

Big Daddy (Shirley Crabtree), wrestler, died yesterday after a stroke, aged 67. He was born on November 14, 1930.

Big Daddy was one of the flamboyant showmen of wrestling in the 1970s and 1980s, watched by incredulous millions at 4 o'clock on a Saturday. The performances had about the same status in sport as Gary Glitter did in music. Most of the wrestlers belonged to the actors' trade union, Equity, and Big Daddy was a true popular entertainer.

A fanfare would welcome him to the arena, where he would shed his top hat and spangled cape to reveal his fighting leotard. Flocks of fans would applaud his signature tune, *We Shall Not Be Moved*, before booing and hissing as a "bad boy" overwhelmed Big Daddy's tag-team partner. The thing would then be Big Daddy himself, before being crushed by the 25-stone hero.

No bookmaker ever offered odds on Big Daddy's fights. They were carefully staged, and beating Big Daddy was said to be against the rules. The pugilistic pantomime demanded that good conquer evil, a moral that appealed to Big Daddy.

In 1987 Tony "Banger" Walsh accused the Crabtrees of rigging and rehearsing the fights, and said that wrestlers would even carry razors so as to cut themselves when the crowd wanted blood. But Big Daddy always denied that the moves were organised in advance, saying that most of his peers were too stupid to plan anything.

Certainly the organisers could not remove all the danger. Big Daddy specialised in a routine called "the splash", belly-flopping onto his opponents when they were down, and in August 1987 Malcolm "King Kong" Kirk died from a heart attack in the ring after Big Daddy fell upon him at the Hippodrome Circus in Great Yarmouth. Two other wrestlers had previously died in his



arms after fighting other opponents. The wages offered to the men who fought Big Daddy were revealed when Kirk's widow received his fee, the usual £25 with £5 extra for taking on Big Daddy.

Yorkshiremen, who are christened Shirley after the eponymous heroine of Charlotte Brontë's novel, like Big Daddy and Big Daddy's dad, have to learn to look after themselves. As a boy growing up in poverty near Halifax, Shirley Crabtree began bodybuilding with barbells made

from a broom handle and a couple of irons, and his childhood heroes were strongmen such as Georges Hackenschmidt, Eugene Sandow and Douglas Clark. He was already fearless when he played rugby league for Bradford Northern second team and was cautioned for excessive aggression.

Like his two brothers he became a Blackpool life guard for a while, rescuing, he said, 27 people. He worked briefly as a coalminer and in a cotton mill, but began wrestling for

money when he was 16. The family occasionally appeared together, with Shirley adopting the names Mr Universe and the Blond Adonis. His brother Brian became a wrestling referee, but more importantly Max, the other brother (who had passed the 11-plus) became a promoter and television agent for Joint Promotions, controlling most of the fights.

Appearing both under his real name and as the Battling Guardsman — he had served briefly in the Coldstream

Guards — Crabtree occasionally appeared on the same bill as Jimmy Savile, who began his showbiz career as a wrestler. They never fought each other, because Savile was only a catchweight while Crabtree was a super-heavyweight, but Savile remembered his ability to create a mood of enjoyable havoc. "As two Yorkshire lads we used to terrorise everyone everywhere and it was a laugh a minute and he had this great booming laugh," Crabtree also gained a place in *The Guinness Book of Records* for his 64in chest. Women wrestling fans, however, found him too aggressive.

So in 1976 he adopted a new and less fierce stage persona, with gilly costumes, and the name Big Daddy, after the character in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. His wife made him a leotard from the chintz sofa cover, and for more than a decade he was a sort of star, locked in bizarre combat with men like Giant Haystacks and Mick McManus, and appearing as the soft-hearted strongman on programmes such as *Surprise, Surprise* and as the subject of *This is Your Life*. He was proud to have been recognised by Margaret Thatcher and the Prince of Wales.

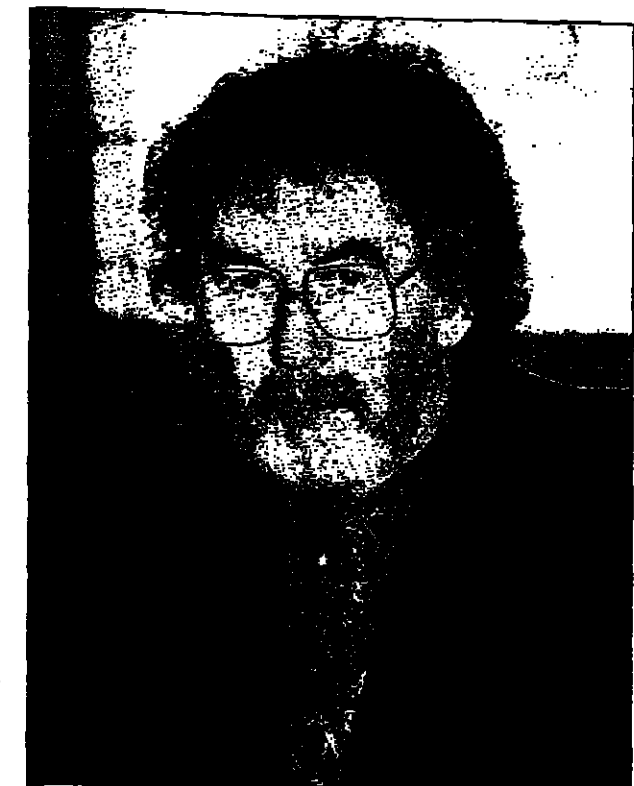
He was a favourite with children, to whom he was devoted, and gave a lot of time to charity work. He also hosted *The Big Daddy Saturday Show* on ITV. He once delivered his weight in chocolate to the sick children in Great Ormond Street Hospital, and was delighted to be able to bring some distracting cheer. "It's like being Father Christmas," he said.

Then, in the mid 1980s, television audiences for wrestling fell away. The undynamic boots had become tedious, and more freakish shows were on offer. Televised wrestling ended in 1988, and Big Daddy went back to starting a dressing-room with Sooty in Southampton and to long walks along the Blackpool seafront. He suffered a stroke in 1993.

He was twice married. He is survived by his second wife, Eunice, and by four daughters and two sons.

MALCOLM GREEN

Malcolm Green, Chief Executive of the Shetland Islands Council, died on November 16 of a haemorrhage after surgery aged 57. He was born on May 14, 1940.



AS THE flow of oil from the North Sea began to diminish in the late 1980s, the fragile economy of Britain's most northerly islands was secured by their chief executive officer, Malcolm Green, in a series of deals he negotiated with the oil industry. By persuading Shell and BP, against their instincts, to keep Shetland's Sullom Voe terminal operating well into the next century, he won the islands a continuing place in the industry even as the focus of interest was moving to new fields in the west and away from onshore terminals.

Green's proposals were roundly attacked at the time, because they reduced substantially the rental paid by the companies to the Islands Council. He also courted unpopularity by insisting that the council's own staff and spending should be pruned. But the net result was a far healthier outlook than Shetland could otherwise have anticipated.

Malcolm Eric Green was neither a native Shetlander nor particularly interested in the oil industry when he first went north. Born and brought up in Matlock in Derbyshire, the son of a cost accountant at ICI, he went into accountancy himself, working first for ICI in Grangemouth, then in the finance department of *The Guardian* in Manchester.

He had, however, inherited one other thing from his father, and that was a fiddle, which he yearned to play. With a friend he attended the famous summer music school at Strling run by the legendary Shetland fiddler Tom Anderson. There he became firm friends not only with Anderson but with his natural heir, Aly Bain, also a Shetlander, and now recognised as Scotland's greatest exponent of the art. Green determined to drop out of the rat race and move to Shetland with his wife, Sheila,

whom he had met in Grangemouth and married in 1964. Responding to an advertisement for an assistant director of finance at Shetland Islands Council, he was offered the job and moved with his family to the islands' capital, Lerwick, in 1978. He won rapid promotion and within ten years was chief executive of the council, and one of the most powerful men in Shetland.

Just as important to him, if not more so, was the Shetland Folk Festival, which he founded, and his own position in the Garster's Dream Band where he played his beloved fiddle, if not with consummate skill, at least with enthusiasm. Tall, bearded and prone to unsettling silences in mid-conversation, Green could seem intimidating.

A hearing problem meant that his own diction was sometimes indistinct; he was not good in his dealings with the media; he made it crystal clear that he thought the council for which he worked was profligate and inefficient; because he understood the intricacies of oil funding better

than most of his colleagues, he sometimes made them feel uncomfortable in his presence and made enemies.

But he also won many friends and admirers, who understood his utter commitment to the welfare of the islands and his long-term strategy to secure their future. In private he was a genuinely witty man, and excellent company. Through a series of kind and private acts he helped many Shetlanders who were down on their luck. One of his prized possessions was a small model puffin, given to him by an old lady he had helped with some housing advice. In 1993, he was thrust into the limelight when the tanker *Braer* went aground, spilling millions of gallons of oil on to the Shetland coastline. Green took over the twice-daily press conferences, organised the local response and set up an emergency forum to protect the islands' fragile environment. The case for compensation which he launched is still before the courts.

He leaves his widow, and two sons.

EDGAR CERELY

Edgar Cerely, MM, wartime bomber navigator, died on November 19 aged 76. He was born on August 28, 1921.

FOR his robust and forthright action in escaping from the clutches of the Germans in occupied Crete, Edgar Cerely received the unusual award of a Military Medal while serving in the RAF Volunteer Reserve. Though suffering from wounds sustained when his torpedo bomber crash-landed (as well as from the scabies he developed while living in hiding in primitive conditions) he broke free of a column of captives and

shook his local shepherds, stayed at large in the Cretan mountains throughout the bitter winter of 1941-42. He was subsequently evacuated to North Africa by boat.

Cerely always acknowledged the help given him and his colleagues by the poor shepherds who tended their flocks on the hard-favoured Cretan uplands. Like their Greek mainland compatriots, they have a special place in the affections of wartime RAF pilots who flew in the Eastern Mediterranean theatre. On occasions village poets even composed funeral eulogies to those British and Commonwealth airmen who had been shot down and killed while

trying to defend Hellenic airspace.

On November 2, 1941, Cerely was a sergeant navigator in a Bristol Beaufort of No 39 Squadron which was searching for enemy shipping off southwest Greece. The aircraft's four-man crew were returning to their base in Egypt when the Beaufort passed through a violent electrical storm which resulted in discrepancies of up to 60 degrees in its three magnetic compasses.

With no means of flying a reliable course, the men continued in what they hoped was the general direction of Egypt until, just as fuel was running low, they saw mountains

ahead and prepared for a forced landing. Cerely jettisoned the bombs, and the pilot, Flight Lieutenant Lenton, brought the aircraft down on a rocky shore. Its nose broke off and Cerely was flung through the rent in the fuselage, sustaining severe lacerations. Lenton suffered scalp wounds, but the wireless operator, Sergeant Langley, and the gunner, Sergeant MacConnachie, were uninjured.

Realising that they had put down on enemy-occupied Crete, the men hid for the night in the hills, returning to the wreckage next morning to secure the emergency rations. Setting off into the mountains again, they were lucky enough

to encounter a local postman who, after a long and gruelling scramble through rocky defiles, brought them to a village whose inhabitants hid them at great risk to themselves.

In the aftermath of the German victory in May, there were still many British and Commonwealth troops in hiding in Crete, and the SOE was trying to evacuate these while setting up guerrilla activity. The Beaufort crew tried to escape by boat with some of these fugitive soldiers, but the engine failed and they had to return to shore. The SOE then advised them to make for the south coast, another gruelling march over the mountainous interior of the island.

Langley was forced to drop out after four days and was captured by the Germans. Weakened by his injuries, Cerely later collapsed with exhaustion himself, but the other men borrowed a donkey to carry him. On the coast, they joined a group of soldiers who were waiting to be taken off by submarine. But on the appointed day a storm blew up and the dinghies could not be launched.

Advised that the Germans had discovered where they were, they dispersed. Cerely now decided to make for the village of Kefalas on the north coast with a soldier who knew of a rowing boat hidden there. After a long march, guided by Cretan shepherds, the pair reached Kefalas, where they joined up with two more soldiers and a young Cretan who wanted to escape. After several weeks being hidden and fed by local people, by March 1942 the five men had



prepared and provisioned the boat and set off, hoping to island-hop to Turkey.

But after three days of arduous rowing, another great storm blew up and drove them onshore. Rounded up by the Germans, they were marched over the mountains towards Heraklion and captivity. But on the first evening, Cerely, who was pretending to have trouble with his make-shift shoes, lagged behind with one of the armed guards while the rest of the five passed round the curve of a mountain. Emaciated and enfeebled though he was, he smashed the guard in the face with all

his force and then bounded recklessly down the mountain, eventually tumbling over and cracking a bone in his ankle. A young Cretan found him and carried him to safety.

Looked after by shepherds, Cerely recovered from his injuries and was able to start walking back to the west. By extraordinary coincidence he met his pilot, Reggie Lenton, in the mountains, and they subsequently joined another group of escapees who included MacConnachie. The SOE directed them to a small bay where, this time, they were successfully taken off by caïque, landing at Bardia in

Libya at the end of May 1942. They had been at large in enemy-occupied Crete for almost seven months. For his resource and bravery, Cerely was awarded the MM.

Returning to England he completed another operational tour, this time in Wellingtons. On one occasion, his aircraft survived a mid-air collision with another Wellington over the Dutch coast. He was commissioned in the course of this tour, and ended the war as a flight lieutenant.

Edgar Roy Cerely was born in Littlehampton and educated at Shoreham Grammar School. He applied for aircrew training at the outbreak of the Second World War.

On demobilisation he worked in the Bank of England, taking early retirement in 1972. He later had a successful picture gallery and framing business in Shoreham-by-Sea. Cerely never forgot his Cretan friends and visited the island on numerous occasions, sometimes for months on end, helping them with the work of putting up new buildings.

He liked pushing himself to the limits of physical endurance. From March to June 1990, then aged 68, he went on a sponsored walk with his nephew, from Sevenoaks across Europe and over the Alps, down through Italy to Athens, resorting to the ferry only for the Newhaven-Dieppe and Brindisi-Paras crossings. They walked 2,675km to raise a substantial sum of money for the Save the Children Fund.

Cerely married Ivy Morrell in 1943. She and their son and daughter survive him.

PERSONAL COLUMN

MIDWINTER RENEZVOUS

For more information on the festive season, visit our website at www.personalcolumn.co.uk

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THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY

THE TIMES OFFICE, 4 o'clock a.m.
PARIS, TUESDAY, DEC. 2, 4 p.m.
The President of the Republic was informed last night that a meeting was held at General Changarnier's house, attended by M. Thiers, M. Baze, and others, of the chiefs of parties, at which it was decided that the day against the President should be made this very day — that is, that he should be arrested, the Assembly prorogued or dissolved, and no doubt the Republic abolished.

It was considered absolutely necessary to take steps immediately. Proclamations were at once prepared, addressed to the nation and to the army, in the former of which the President explained his cause of complaint, and declared that instead of employing himself in taking care of the interests of the people, the Assembly had only become a theatre of conspiracies and plots against him, the elect of the people. He makes an appeal to the people by whom he has been elected. He restores universal suffrage, summons the people to assemble next month in their communes to elect a new assembly; to this new assembly he will resign his powers, and let the nation exercise its will in either electing or rejecting him...

ON THIS DAY

December 3, 1851

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (1808-73) was elected President in 1848. From the outset there was a struggle between him and the Assembly. On its dissolution he assumed the title of Napoleon III. The defeat of France by Prussia in 1870 forced him to abdicate; he fled to England and died at Chislehurst, Kent.

"APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE"
"Frenchmen: The present situation cannot last much longer. Each day the situation of the country becomes worse. The Assembly, which ought to be the firmest supporter of order, has become a theatre of plots... In place of making laws for the general interest of the people it was forging arms for civil war. It attacked the power I hold directly from the people; it encouraged every evil passion; it endangered the repose of France. I have dissolved it, and I make the whole people judge between me and it... I, then, make a loyal appeal to the entire

nation; and I say to you if you wish to continue this state of disquietude and malaise that degrades you and endangers the future, choose another person in my place... If, on the contrary, you have still confidence in me, give me the means of accomplishing the grand mission I hold from you... Persuaded that the instability of power, that the preponderance of a single Assembly, are the permanent causes of trouble and discord, I submit to your suffrages the fundamental bases of a constitution which the assemblies will develop hereafter.
"1. A responsible chief named for 10 years.
"2. The Ministers dependent on the Executive alone.
"3. A Council of State formed of the most distinguished men preparing the laws and maintaining the discussion before the legislative corps.
"4. A legislative corps, discussing and voting the laws, named by universal suffrage, without the scrutiny of lists which falsifies the election.
"5. A second Assembly formed of all the illustrious persons of the nation; a preponderating power, guardian of the fundamental pact and of public liberty...
(Signed) LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE
"Palace of the Elysee, Dec 2"

THE TIMES

2

INSIDE
SECTION
2
TODAY



BUSINESS

Stagecoach chief
offers new trains for
extended franchise
PAGE 26



CREME

Cheers... it may
be time for a big
career decision
PAGE 41



SPORT

Hoddle hides his
dismay over
World Cup seeding
PAGES 43-48

TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
PAGES
46, 47

BUSINESS EDITOR: Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 3 1997

Isa will boost supermarkets and insurers

Unit trust groups likely to lose out as Peps go

BY ANNE ASHWORTH, PERSONAL FINANCE EDITOR

SUPERMARKETS and life insurance companies stand to prosper from the new individual savings account (Isa). Labour's tax-free replacement for the two Tory savings incentives, tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) and personal equity plans (Peps).

The outlook may be more bleak for the investment managers who have dominated the £58 billion PEP market. Shares at quoted unit trust groups fell. Proposals for the new account, outlined in a consultation document published yesterday, would put unit trust groups at a disadvantage in the savings world of the new millennium.

Privately some dismissed features of the new account as "gimmicky", including the lottery-style £1,000 a month prize for savers.

Insurance companies, by contrast, welcomed the proposals under which £1,000 of the £5,000 annual Isa limit can be put into life insurance policies.

The Association of British Insurers said it may seek to have this limit raised. Insurers have long complained that tax relief favoured building societies and unit trusts. Tax relief on life insurance premiums was abolished in the 1984 Budget.

The Isa, which will supplant Peps and Tessas in April 1999, is good news for supermarkets that have branched out into banking. Ministers are particularly eager that these chains should offer the new accounts.

as this would make them more easily accessible to the low paid among whom it wishes to encourage more thrift.

Even Schroders, one of the largest and most successful unit trust groups, conceded that the Isa's success among those on low incomes would be "in the hands of new distributors".

Tesco, which has 400,000 account holders, explained that the 12 million people who buy at its shops each week would be able to put money into their Isas at the checkout. No modification of tills is necessary, Andrew Coker, of Tesco Personal Finance, said:

Savings tax 1
Questions 12 and 13
Commentary 27

"People coming through our checkouts will want to take advantage of this."

BEST, investment, which specialises in the analysis of Peps and unit trusts, predicted that the supermarkets and high street banks would be the greatest beneficiaries from the introduction of the new account, but that unit trust groups could be the losers.

Jason Hollands, a BEST investment director, explained that many existing unit trust group customers already held more than £50,000 in Peps. This is the limit on the amount of PEP holdings that may be

transferred into an Isa, and also the lifetime limit on holdings. Schroders will be among the unit trust groups campaigning for a significantly higher ceiling.

Unit trust groups would also be hard-pressed to make money from the new accounts, as they could be more expensive to administer. The Isa will be able to hold a mixture of cash, shares, insurance policies and National Savings, making them flexible for investors but costly to run. There is likely to be strong pressure from ministers for low charges.

Fidelity, one of the largest groups, conceded that there would be extra administration. A spokesman added: "It will require a whole new layer of Big Brother monitoring to police the limits."

David Mossop, chief executive of Perpetual, the largest PEP provider, called the Isa as an "administrative headache". He calculated that 2 per cent of his customers have more than £50,000 invested in Peps. But he confirmed that the large unit trust groups would still be selling Isas. The Perpetual share price fell 17.7p to £24.20.

Ambrose McGinn, director of retail savings at Abbey National, said: "As one of the UK's leading savings institutions with a relationship with one in three households and the largest customer base, we look forward to working with the Government to refine its proposals."



Gamble loses: the RSA chief was perceived as being at odds with the deputy chairman

Gamble goes at Royal & Sun

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

RICHARD GAMBLE, chief executive of Royal & Sun Alliance, is the first casualty in a reorganisation of the composite insurer's board announced yesterday.

RSA shares rose 16p to 560p after the announcement that he had been replaced with immediate effect by Robert Mendelsohn, 51, who until now has run the US operation. RSA was unable to say whether Mr Gamble, 58, had a new

job outside the company to go to when he leaves at the end of the month. He recently cashed in share options worth £1.2 million and could walk away from the post with a £750,000 payout — twice his annual salary.

The shake-up follows criticism from the City that the board was top-heavy; that Mr Gamble and Roger Taylor, the executive deputy chairman of RSA, had differing

views over strategy. Mr Taylor, chairman of the Association of British Insurers, has also relinquished his management duties to become non-executive deputy chairman.

Patrick Gillam, who succeeded Sir Christopher Benson as chairman and who had a secret brief to sort out the management structure, said: "This is the natural next step in the development of the group."

NatWest to sell bulk of Markets for £179m

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

NATWEST GROUP revealed yesterday that it is to sell the bulk of its NatWest Markets business for £179 million — bringing down the final curtain on attempts by UK banks to establish themselves as global players in the investment banking market.

Bankers Trust, the US investment bank, is to buy NatWest's UK and European equities business while Deutsche Morgan Grenfell is purchasing the US and Asian derivatives business for £50 million.

The price represented a £55 million premium over net asset value although NatWest revealed it would be taking a £210 million provision to cover the costs of the sale and internal restructuring — in addition to the previously announced £77 million charge for options mispricing.

The bank also said that it expected losses from its NatWest Markets arm to total £210 million for the year.

NatWest's decision to exit the loss-making business closely follows the sale of the majority of Barclays' investment banking arm, BZW, to Credit Suisse First Boston for £100 million.

The bank also dropped a strong hint that it would return capital to shareholders next year because the sale had freed up about £5 billion used as asset backing for the businesses.

NatWest added that it was in discussions over the sale of its Asian cash equities business and Australian investment businesses.

The bank will also shut its US cash equity business, but the company insisted that it is committed to building up its US and UK corporate advisory businesses.

Commentary, page 27

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET
INDICES

FTSE 100 4977.6 (+55.8)
Yield 3.32%
FTSE All share 2341.66 (+20.92)
Nikkei 16910.29 (-97.30)
New York
Dow Jones 8021.55 (+8.45)
S&P Composite 973.27 (-1.51)

US RATE
Federal Funds 5 1/4% (5 1/4%)
Long Bond 6.04% (6.04%)
Yield
LONDON MONEY
3-mth interbank 7 1/4% (7 1/4%)
Life long gilt future (Mar) 119 1/2 (119 1/2)

STERLING
New York 1.6821* (1.6860)
London 1.6823 (1.6845)
S 2.9654 (2.9539)
DM 9.9929 (10.0180)
FF 2.4089 (2.4133)
Yen 165.49 (167.74)
£ Index 105.4 (105.8)

\$\$\$ DOLLAR
London 1.7750* (1.7770)
DM 5.5380* (5.5485)
FF 1.4330* (1.4325)
Yen 128.58* (128.60)
\$ Index 107.7 (108.0)
Tokyo close Yen 128.61

NORTH SEA OIL
Brent 15-day (Feb) \$18.20 (\$18.15)

GOLD
London close \$284.35 (\$284.25)
* denotes midday trading price

Reassuring

Shares in Williams, the former conglomerate, rose 8 1/2 p to 328 1/2 p after the security and alarm services group released a positive trading statement that reassured the market about prospects.

Extortion

Japan's most notorious racketeer, Ryuichi Kojike, pleaded guilty yesterday to extorting tens of millions of dollars from top Japanese financial firms. His prey included Japan's big four brokers, and the now defunct Yamaichi. Page 31

BACM urges end of dash for gas

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE All-Party inquiry into the future of coal will today be urged to look at scrapping all gas-fired power stations that have planning consent but which have not been built.

The move would mark a fundamental rebalancing of energy fuel mix and shift it from pure market forces.

The call from the British Association of Colliery Management will be made as the dash for gas comes increasingly under the spotlight amid coal's declining market.

Hundreds of miners are expected to lobby the Government today as the Trade and Industry Select Committee holds an investigation into the future of coal in the face of expected pit closures.

Pat Carragher, general secretary of BACM, will urge the radical end to the dash for gas while calling for greater scrutiny of the electricity generators. He will say that while the price of coal has fallen by 40 per cent over five years, this has not been translated into a similar reduction in generation prices. He said yesterday:

"There has been a good deal said about RIB's profitability recently. But the generators have been making high profits by not passing on the cheaper costs of coal."

His arguments will be backed by new research being considered by the Trades Union Congress. This, passed to the TUC by Hugh Lee, an energy consultant, says that the generators will be making excess profits if they pay less than £1.30 a gigajoule of coal, as it is on those projections that the regulator based his recent supply price control. It is thought that recent deals between RJB and Eastern and National Power have been struck at between £1.17p to £1.20p. The regulator, however, has no power over the generators.

Despite the impact of potential pit closures on the electricity market John Battle, Energy Minister, has held no talks with Stephen Litchfield, the regulator, over the future for the coal industry.

Disenchantment, page 29

Sears sells Dolcis for £1.6m

BY FRASER NELSON

SEARS, the troubled Selfridges-to-Wallis group, has started the promised auction of its British Shoe Corporation by selling Dolcis to a joint venture headed by Alexon for £1.6 million.

The company, which last month put all its 400 shoe shops up for sale, expects to make a £13 million loss on Dolcis and lose a further £137 million from disposing of the remaining three chains.

Dolcis will be run by John Osborn, chief executive of Alexon, and ultimately controlled by Electra Fleming, a venture capital house, which is putting in £7 million of working capital.

Alexon will take on 1,500 Dolcis staff and rent shops from unnamed third parties.

Alexon is putting up £6 million, and can buy out Electra for £14 million in the next two years. After that, it must pay up to £30 million — a deal guaranteeing that Electra will at least double its money if Dolcis returns to financial health. Sears shares added 1/2 p to 49p.

Ernst & Young in \$4bn action

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

ERNST & YOUNG International, the accounting and consulting group, faces a \$4 billion lawsuit over its part in the collapse of a US clothing retailer.

In the biggest damages case brought against an accountant, the bankruptcy trustee for Merry-Go-Round, which failed in 1996, is suing Ernst & Young for alleged negligence and fraud. Deborah Hunt Devan, the trustee, is seeking \$1 billion in compensatory damages, the market value of the retailer in 1993 when it hired Ernst & Young, plus \$3 billion in punitive damages. Ernst & Young was hired to revive the ailing business.

The damages, if awarded by a court in Baltimore where the suit was filed, would be similar in size to Ernst & Young's US revenues this year.

The accountant was paid \$4.5 million for advising Merry-Go-Round. The retailer alleges that Ernst & Young was using "young and inexperienced accountants" who "utterly failed to take the most basic steps required".

One of the items on the list of complaints concerns the closure of some of its 1,500 shops. According to the suit, Ernst & Young was slow to terminate loss-making operations. When the closures came, they were scheduled just before Christmas, the most profitable shopping period. Ms Devan said: "E&Y's untimely and incompetent performance of its duties was a direct and proximate cause of the failure of Merry-Go-Round to be reorganised and restructured successfully."

The "big six" accountancy groups, which now earn significant parts of their total revenue from consulting work, are rarely the subject of billion-dollar lawsuits. Ernst & Young said they had not received the legal documents but saw no basis for the allegations.

Merry-Go-Round accounts were being audited by KPMG Peat Marwick, which is planning to merge with Ernst & Young, raising the possibility of a high-profile conflict of interests.

Branson expects WHS to name its price

BY CHRIS AYRES

RICHARD BRANSON, head of the Virgin empire, said yesterday that he expected WH Smith to name a price within two weeks for its 75 per cent stake in the Virgin Our Price joint venture, which owns the Virgin Megastore record shops.

The troubled retailer has already turned down a £126 million offer from Mr Branson, and yesterday reiterated that it planned to sell the stake but

refused to comment on the timing of a possible deal.

If WH Smith waits until 1999 it can buy out Virgin's 25 per cent stake and own the right to use the Virgin name for music retailing in the UK until 2021. But Mr Branson said: "That is not what they've said they're going to do. They want to sell it and we're still waiting for them to tell us how much for, then we'll be happy to respond. There's a price at which we'll buy and a price at which we won't."

Mr Branson, who was celebrating the first anniversary of his record label, V2, yesterday, said he had renewed his ambitions in the music industry. He expected V2, which this week released the tribute album to Diana, Princess of Wales, to be worth more than £600 million in five years' time. In 1992 he sold Virgin Records to the then Thorn EMI as a cash-raising exercise for his Virgin Atlantic airline. The deal restricted him from re-entering the music business for 30 months.

V2 is regarded as unique in the music industry because it has independent offices all over the world, with the level of funding usually available only to publicly quoted companies. Mr Branson is believed to be prepared to spend up to £60 million on establishing the label. V2 is forecasting a doubling of sales to more than £60 million next year. Yesterday it signed Underworld, the dance music act made famous by the film *Trainspotting*, and is establishing an Internet distribution system.

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Barclaycard	22.9%	£10
NatWest	21.9%	£12
Harrods	29.8%	Nil
Marks & Spencer	25.8%	Nil

*Source: Moneyfacts: comparative data is correct as 20/9/97.

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Hogg Robinson to beat pensions deadline

BY DOMINIC WALSH

HOGG ROBINSON, the travel and financial services group pilloried by the Government earlier this year for its pensions mis-selling compensation record, expects to have cleared all outstanding priority cases by March.

In July the company headed a table of the worst offenders issued by the Government as part of its "naming and shaming" tactic, having settled

only 1 per cent of priority cases. But the company said yesterday that it expects to meet the deadline for settling priority cases for people approaching retirement age.

David Radcliffe, chief executive, said 54 per cent of priority cases had been completed by October, and the total of 1,900 cases would be settled by March, well ahead of the December 1998 deadline.

The cost of settling cases has increased because of the impact of

advance corporation tax changes and higher annuity costs. However, Neville Bain, chairman, said: "We believe there will be no material financial impact over and above our current provisions for priority cases on the full-year results."

Mr Bain declined to reveal the amounts involved. The news came as Hogg Robinson revealed a rise in underlying half-year profits from £12.05 million to £14.53 million on sales up from £699.8 million to £735.8 million.

However, the pre-tax figure shrank from £14.02 million to just £1.9 million after a £12.95 million provision on the sale of the transport division in September. There was also a £400,000 provision for the relocation of its head office. Financial services, which UK Active Value, holder of 4 per cent of the shares, has been pressing the company to sell, raised profits 11 per cent to £4.28 million.

Business travel, meanwhile, rose

25 per cent to £11.07 million — a 37 per cent rise at constant exchange rates. Mr Radcliffe said financial services would be retained, although he admitted: "Some elements might not fit longer term."

Mr Radcliffe also said that the group had £65 million at its disposal to fund acquisitions, and a further £15 million to fund a buyback of up to 7.5 per cent of its shares. An interim dividend of 4.07p (3.70p) will be paid on January 20.

Stagecoach will invest if franchise is extended

BY FRASER NELSON

STAGECOACH has offered to spend more than £400 million on new carriages for its South West Trains network if John O'Brien, the franchising director, agrees to extend its franchise for a further seven years.

Brian Souter, chief executive of the transport group, is to tell Mr O'Brien that Stagecoach will make the London Waterloo commuter line the most modern rail franchise in Britain if it is given the chance to keep running it until 2010.

The offer will stand until the next set of rail franchises comes up for tender in four years' time, Mr Souter said. "We run 120 sets of trains, and we're renewing 30 of them already. What we're saying is that we will renew the lot if the franchise were extended. We could do it all in three years if we were to get the green light now."

The new trains would replace its 360-strong slam-door fleet, bought by its Porterbrook leasing company, then hired to South West Trains. Stagecoach has already ordered 30 new trains for £90 million. It has the franchise until 2003.

The offer comes nine months after Stagecoach was fined £1

million for cancelling 2,000 trains, after it made too many drivers redundant. Mr Souter said the company had completely recovered from the problem and has cut the workforce by a further 200, to 3,700, at a cost of about £5 million.

Stagecoach's half-year results yesterday identified South West Trains and Porterbrook leasing companies as the two most profitable parts of the privatised rail network.

It made £7.8 million profit from South West Trains, after a £1 million-a-week subsidy, helped by an overall £73,000 bonus from the franchising director. Porterbrook, which has just over 100 staff, made a profit of £62.7 million after taking in £186 million in rent from its 17 rail franchises. This helped overall pre-tax profits to reach £70.5 million (£47 million) for the six months to October 31.

It said the number of timetabled rush-hour rail carriages on the Waterloo line rose 4.9 per cent over the six months, although in practice technical problems saw the company fined £236,000 for running too few carriages.

Some analysts fear that Porterbrook's operating margin will be curbed by regulation. Analysts said that Porterbrook's operating margin of 34 per cent is better than any company in the FTSE 100 index bar National Grid and is inviting a government crackdown.

Mr Souter said these fears were "completely off the wall", adding: "Porterbrook's contracts are protected under English law." He said the company would seek compensation if the contracts were broken.

The £2 million cost of competing with rival Firstbus in Strathclyde and Fife was blamed for sluggish growth of 1.5 per cent in the bus division. The company has ordered 529 buses for delivery, a third fewer than the number on order last time.

The interim dividend rises a third, to 4p, suggesting a total 12p payout for the full year. This would give Mr Souter £4.06 million in dividends and provide Ann Gloag, his sister, with a £3.37 million payment.

Tempus, page 28



Chris Wright, seated, Chrysalis chairman, with Philip McDanell, managing director, at the Heart studios in London

Character toy firm hopes to double size in year

BY CHRIS AYRES

CHARACTER GROUP, the toy company responsible for bringing Spice Girls dolls and Teletubbies keyrings to the shops, yesterday said that it could double in size over the next 12 months.

The company, which has already sold 800,000 Teletubbies keyrings in the run up to Christmas, made the claim as it reported a 29 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for the year to August 31, from £3.6 million to £4.7 million.

Richard King, chairman, said: "We're having a very

good Christmas, we have met all our projections and we're short of merchandise." He said the first shipment of Spice Girls dolls sold out within an hour of reaching the shops, and supply could not meet demand.

"My opinion is that we could make two million and they'd sell out," he said.

Character's sales rose 36 per cent, from £30 million to £41 million, last year. Earnings per share were up 22 per cent, from 12.33p to 15.08p. A total dividend of 4.5p, up from 3.5p,

is due to be paid on January 30.

Mr King said: "The company will certainly double in size within the next two years, possibly this year. We have a very broad range of products — over 3,000 in one of our divisions — and they are in new areas that are expanding very quickly."

The group aimed to grow organically, but was considering opportunities to buy companies involved in character-related goods, he said. It has cash balances of £3.7 million.

Chrysalis expects to end run of losses

BY RAYMOND SNODDY
MEDIA EDITOR

CHRIS WRIGHT, chairman of the Chrysalis Group, said yesterday that brokers now expect the radio, music publishing and television production company to move into profit, or at least break even, in its 1998-99 financial year.

Mr Wright was speaking after announcing the company's fifth year of pre-tax losses — this time a loss of £1.9 million (£5.4 million) — in the year to August 31.

He said that in the five years "we have built an important major company" by investing in everything from new radio licences to music publishing.

During the year turnover rose 7 per cent, to £99 million, and the operating loss fell 13 per cent from £5.8 million to £5.1 million. There was an exceptional profit of £2.6 million on corporate disposals. The loss per share was 5.53p, against 19.45p last time and Chrysalis is paying a dividend of 2.75p.

Mr Wright also said the current year had started well and after five years of heavy investment the company had "established a leading position in its chosen markets".

Siebe free of Far East woes



Yurko: Asian sales strong

SHARES in Siebe clawed back much of last month's losses yesterday after the maker of temperature controls said that it is not being affected by turmoil in Far Eastern markets (Fraser Nelson writes).

The company, which exports £200 million of goods to the Far East each year, also assured the City that currency fluctuations would not prevent this year's profits from being "outstanding".

Allen Yurko, chief executive, said: "Our order book in Asia is very strong and we have not

seen any decline in booking rates yet."

Pre-tax profits rose 16 per cent, to £222 million, in the half year to September 9, even after an £18.3 million reverse from sterling's strength. Earnings per share rose to 27.7p (24p). An interim dividend of 5.4p (4.9p) is due on April 8.

The shares, down to £10.39 last month, rose 38p to £11.63 as analysts lifted full-year profit forecasts from £491 million to £505 million.

Tempus, page 28

Videologic deeper in red at half time

BY CHRIS AYRES

VIDEOLÓGIC, the troubled computer graphics company, yesterday said that first-half pre-tax losses more than doubled in the six months to September 30, from £1.2 million to £2.9 million, while turnover fell 25 per cent, from £7.3 million to £5.4 million.

The company also said that Tony MacLaren, its chief executive, would stand down after 13 years with the group.

Videologic blamed the poor results on its £1.9 million restructuring, which will make the company more dependent on royalties from component and chip design than on product building.

Geoff Shingles, its chairman, said he was confident in the future, and highlighted a £13 million investment by NEC, the electronics group, as proof of potential. "The development of 3D graphics reinforces our belief that our technology strategy and partnerships are the correct model for continued success," he said.

Brown urged to spend

GORDON BROWN will today come under fire from a senior Labour peer over his refusal to boost economic growth by increasing public spending (James Lendale writes).

Lord Barnett, Chief Secretary to the Treasury in the last Labour Government in the 1970s, will say that unemployment will grow to unacceptable levels unless he loosens the public purse strings.

Last week Mr Brown gave a pessimistic

assessment of the economy's future in his pre-Budget statement, forecasting growth dipping to below 3 per cent. Speaking in a debate on the economy in the Lords today, Lord Barnett will say: "Growth figures are too low. We are going to go to the end of the century with economic growth levels forecast to be well below 3 per cent and I find that too low. The Chancellor should go for higher levels."

Generation review plea

BUSINESS users, including J Sainsbury, GKN and British Airways, are pressing for electricity generation to be thrown into the spotlight of a review into power trading (Christine Buckley writes). They called for large generators to be forced to sell more power stations to boost competition.

The call from the Utility Buyers Forum echoes other pleas to the industry regulator, who is drafting

terms for the review ordered by the Government. Generation has been attacked for lacking competition and for payments made to the generators for them to keep power stations available.

The forum wants a fully independent review to concentrate on promoting competition. It said: "Contract prices remain on an upward path due to the dominant influence of a few players in the price-setting generation market."

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Albany Life fined £375,000 by PLA

THE Personal Investment Authority has reprimanded and fined Albany Life £375,000 and ordered it to pay £32,000 costs for failing to meet its first deadline in the pensions mis-selling review. Albany had to settle 90 per cent of its 983 most urgent cases by the end of September. However, delays in getting information from occupational pensions schemes into which mis-selling victims are supposed to be reinstated meant the company had offered compensation to only 80 per cent.

Malcolm Kerr, marketing director, said the company had now reached its target. However, he could not guarantee that it would reach its second target of settling all 2,633 cases by next September.

Debt deal for Russia

RUSSIA and its Western creditor banks closed a landmark \$32.3 billion (£19 billion) debt deal, marking a further step in the country's financial rehabilitation. "Today we finalised the closing procedure on London Club restructuring," Andrei Kostin, chairman of Vneshekonombank, the state bank, said in London. The deal was signed by 423 banks and financial institutions belonging to the so-called London Club of commercial creditors. Mr Kostin said that the transfer of about \$3 billion would be made as part of interest payments to all creditors.

Airbus seeks \$500m

THE Government may be asked for a loan of up to \$500 million (£303 million) to help to launch an aircraft that would be bigger than the Boeing 747, currently the largest on the market. Airbus Industrie, the pan-European aircraft manufacturer, wants to build the A3XX to be in service in 2003. The aircraft would have the capacity to carry 555 or more people and would also contain innovations such as a gym, a bar or a crèche. The total cost of the project is likely to be about \$8 billion.

Applied breakthrough

APPLIED MATERIALS INC is expected this week to unveil a new system for manufacturing semiconductors that will help the microchip industry to move more quickly to the production of advanced chips using copper. Applied, based in Santa Clara, California, is the largest maker of equipment used to manufacture semiconductors. Analysts said that Applied would announce a core system for making semiconductors, called a CVD (chemical vapor deposition) system, designed to use copper instead of aluminum to make faster semiconductors.

Chieftain confident

SHARES in Chieftain, the engineering and construction group, rose from 57½p to 75p after it said the results to December 31, 1997, were expected to exceed current market estimates by a significant margin. It said that, since the acquisition of the pipework fabrications and erection business of R Blackett Charlton in 1994, the group had been substantially reorganised. It is now focusing on higher margin engineering products and services including industrial pipework, ductwork, and other steel fabrications.

Leslie Wise hit

SHARES of Leslie Wise fell 5p to 19p after the clothing manufacturer said that profitability for the year to November 30 would be below expectations at the time of its interim statement. Pressure on margins in the second half has been accentuated by the continuing difficult trading conditions on the high street. The company said: "Although the garment division overall has achieved a moderate increase in volume, the pressure applied to margins by the major retail groups has reduced the division's profitability."

Cabletron shares plunge

SHARES of Cabletron Systems lost 22 per cent of their value after the US provider of networking products and services warned the New York Stock Exchange that earnings would miss the mark for the third straight quarter. Cabletron fell \$6.06 (£3.50) to \$17.125. The company said earnings for its fiscal third quarter ending in November were likely to be between 8 cents to 12 cents a share, well short of consensus estimates of 39 cents a share. It was estimated that revenues would drop to between \$330 million and \$340 million from \$361 million a year ago.

Copebras joint venture

MINORCO said Copebras, its 73 per cent-held subsidiary, and Albright & Wilson have signed a letter of intent to form a joint venture based in Brazil to supply the growing phosphate markets in Chile and the Mercosur, the trading bloc established by Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. The venture, owned 50 per cent by each partner, will combine the local market presence and assets of Copebras with the technology and global network of Albright & Wilson to build a technical phosphates plant, with start-up by the end of 1998.

Bank		Bank		Bank		Bank	
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.58	2.40	2.58	2.40	2.58	2.40	2.58
Austria Sch	22.01	20.35	22.01	20.35	22.01	20.35	22.01
Belgium Fr	94.81	93.21	94.81	93.21	94.81	93.21	94.81
Canada \$	2.521	2.339	2.521	2.339	2.521	2.339	2.521
Cyprus Cyp£	0.917	0.848	0.917	0.848	0.917	0.848	0.917
Denmark Kr	11.96	11.07	11.96	11.07	11.96	11.07	11.96
Finland Mk	9.58	8.83	9.58	8.83	9.58	8.83	9.58
France Fr	10.48	9.88	10.48	9.88	10.48	9.88	10.48
Germany Dr	3.15	2.91	3.15	2.91	3.15	2.91	3.15
Greece Dr	494	455	494	455	494	455	494
Hong Kong \$	13.88	12.65	13.88	12.65	13.88	12.65	13.88
India Ru	121	101	121	101	121	101	121
Ireland Pt	1.20	1.11	1.20	1.11	1.20	1.11	1.20
Israel Sh	6.52	5.92	6.52	5.92	6.52	5.92	6.52
Italy Lit	3101	2894	3101	2894	3101	2894	3101
Japan Yen	232.13	214.60	232.13	214.60	232.13	214.60	232.13

Notes for small denomination bank notes supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

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Rivals may

Why does new Labour hate savers? Gordon Brown's £5 billion-a-year tax on pension funds will mainly hit the young, slashing future pensions for millions. Geoffrey Robinson is redressing the balance by attacking older savers in Peps and Tessas.

The young will be allowed to subscribe up to £50,000 over a decade or more into his Individual Savings Account, hoping to build up tax-free savings of perhaps £150,000 plus. But those who have invested £50,000 over ten years in Peps and Tessas will have the return on that saving treated as the wealth of the rich and have its tax privileges removed. Those relying on the income from that £50,000 saving in retirement will have their income slashed.

As it happens, savers who put near the maximum into Peps from the start might now reasonably expect to have savings worth £150,000 or more after charges. Potential ISA savers should presume that the same fate awaits them if they take the Treasury's tax shilling.

If you can manage to put up to £50,000, you are an ordinary saver who deserves encouragement. If you earn a reasonable return, you become, as Mr Robinson put it, "very well-off people" who exploit tax loopholes at the expense of ordinary taxpayers. He may not have noticed that these are the same people.

New Labour was determined

to have its own completely different savings scheme. Its absurdly complex ISA proposals show the blinkered zeal of compulsive meddlers who are a soft touch to home pressure groups such as friendly societies.

There is one welcome novelty. Those on modest incomes can save up to £1,000 a year in secure deposits that yield tax-free income without tying money up for as long as in Tessas. Annual deadlines for tax privileges can persuade people to save more. But the main reason so many do not save is that they cannot afford to. The only way to change that is to impose cuts in their living standards by law (as in the forthcoming stakeholder pension) or to axe the welfare net.

ISA schemes to attract small savings into deposits will no doubt develop separately, not least because the costs of a hybrid ISA, taking in all the options, would be too high. The same could have been achieved, however, by a dedicated new National Savings scheme, or one run by banks and building societies. The extra cost in lost tax could easily have been met by cutting the annual Peps limit. Why be pragmatic, though, when you can have fun wrecking

people's savings plans? In just seven months, the Government must have convinced everyone that they can have no faith in any long-term savings vehicle remaining intact.

More raids will be made on pensions: ISAs are designed for tinkering. Best put the money in the only tax-efficient vehicle that one can rely on top Government ministers of any party to defend to the last: an offshore family trust like Mr Robinson's.

When the business is beyond the bank

Audible sighs of relief emanated from Louthbury yesterday, as NatWest rid itself of the vestiges of any aspiration towards investment banking. Chief executive Derek Wanless was even prepared to don verbal sackcloth and admit what a hash NatWest had made of its ambitions in that direction.

COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

He could hardly have done otherwise, given the figures involved.

In its mood of *mea culpa*, the bank decided to confess the extent of its failure rather than fudge now and work on producing a prettified picture for unveiling at the year end. The truth provides a gorey illustration of how quick and easy it is to lose vast sums of money in these markets if you couple incompetent management with tricky trading conditions.

As NatWest owned up, a sense of one-upmanship over the chaps at Barclays seemed to be providing some comfort, and even encouragement, during what would otherwise have been an exceedingly painful exercise.

So there was much emphasis on the fact that, unlike Barclays, NatWest's sales are at least at a premium to net assets, even if the £179 million price struck some as miserly. Most had also underestimated the scale of the losses

the bank had been cranking up in its putative investment bank under Martin Owen's leadership. Yesterday, NatWest forecast a loss for the year of £210 million before the £270 million cost of restructuring after the sales and the little matter of £77 million that went missing from the derivatives business earlier this year. But, hey, what's £557 million when you're learning your limitations?

Wanless and his chairman, Lord Alexander of Weedon, must now convince the City that the lesson has been learnt and that they now have a clear strategy for NatWest. If, for instance, they cannot reassure customers that they are wedded to the corporate finance division long term, deals will continue to go elsewhere. They have much to prove, for they were theoretically in charge as costs at NatWest Markets soared and supervision slipped under the Owen regime.

Others in the City are still

splashing the cash around, however. Deutsche Morgan Grenfell is paying £50 million for NatWest's global equity derivatives division. Most of that is accounted for by the 100 individuals involved. Figures like that explain why Britain's clearing bankers have decided they don't want to play such dangerous games any more.

Osborn puts the boot into Sears

For John Osborn, buying the Dolcis business from Sears may have something of the sweet smell of revenge. He was booted out of British Shoe Corporation just as he was wielding the axe which was so desperately needed to try to bring the straggling operation into line. The turnaround he has effected at Alexon is evidence of what he might have achieved had Sears allowed him a little longer at BSC.

Yet the deal he has constructed with Electra Fleming indicates he certainly has faith in his abilities. If he can pull Dolcis into the shape he wants within two years, he has the option to buy out Electra at twice the price

of their investment: the sort of return of which venture capitalists dream. If the turnaround takes longer, the cost of independence rises to up to £30 million.

Sears must already be dreading the reaction if Osborn should accomplish the two-year transformation. The sale is costing the company £13 million and seeing Dolcis rapidly put to rights would be another indignity in a long line of them. The company sold its Olympus sports chain to Philip Green only to see the business race ahead towards flotation on the back of a booming sportswear market. Sears was left bemoaning its dwindling sales as customers flocked to its former shops.

With bids due in for its Shoe City and Shoe Express chains by the end of this week, Sears must be dreading letting others demonstrate how good those businesses too could be.

Herculean battle

THE battle between Bradford-based Allied Colloids and the American chemicals company, Hercules, is shaping up for a fascinating fight. Yesterday the plain-speaking northerners fired off a set of figures that would have been even more remarkable were there not an aggressive bidder on the scene. Chief executive David Farrar is new enough to the job to have no need to defend Colloids' history, only its prospects. So much easier.

Bid talks boost shares in troubled Merrydown

By DOMINIC WALSH

MERRYDOWN, the Sussex cidermaker laid low by the slump in sales of Two Dogs alcoholic lemonade, saw its market value soar 15 per cent yesterday after it revealed that it was in bid talks.

Richard Purdey, executive chairman, said: "If an offer is forthcoming that the board feels to be in the best interests of shareholders, it will proceed accordingly." Its shares gained 15p to 65p.

There was speculation that the company could be in talks with a rival such as Matthew Clark or HP Bulmer, although analysts said Matthew Clark was probably too busy rebuilding its brands after a battering at the hands of the alcopops' explosion, and Bulmer said that it was not in talks.

A more likely option would be a larger drinks or brewing group with the muscle to support and distribute the company's cider and Shloer grape juice brands. Analysts cited as a candidate Pernod Ricard, pointing out that it had shown an interest in



Richard Purdey of Merrydown is hoping for a formal offer

Taunton Cider before it was acquired by Matthew Clark in 1995. The French group distributes Two Dogs in Europe. In case a formal bid fails to materialise, Mr Purdey has an alternative strategy of scaling back the company and reshaping the board under a new non-executive chairman.

Andy Nash, former managing director of Matthew Clark and a former commercial director of Taunton Cider.

Mr Purdey, executive chairman since 1992 and a member of the founding family, would become non-executive deputy chairman. Two other directors, Colin Fitch and Peter

Monro, would retire at the next annual meeting.

The sharp drop in sales of Two Dogs, and the difficult trading conditions that continue to afflict the cider market, contributed to a pre-tax loss of almost £1 million, compared to a profit of £670,000. Turnover in the six months to September 30 slumped by 41 per cent, to £11.45 million. The loss per share is 6.73p compared to earnings of 3.57p and there is no interim dividend.

The company was forced to hand over distribution of Two Dogs to Scottish & Newcastle, but yesterday it said the move had failed to prevent sales "diminishing to a fraction of its former volume", thought to have been £50 million at the height of the alcopops craze last year. Handling distribution to S&N was responsible for most of the exceptional costs of £630,000.

Mr Purdey said changes taken to cut costs meant trading for key brands in the third quarter was ahead of the same period last year.

Tempus, page 28
City Diary, page 29

Dorling dips on profits warning

By OUR CITY STAFF

SHARES in Dorling Kindersley fell from 247.5p to 221p after the publishing group said that it expects pre-tax profits for the half year to December 1997 to be lower than the £6.8 million achieved in the first half of last year.

The benefits of a cost-reduction programme, introduced earlier this year and now being stepped up, will begin to flow through in the second half, which is traditionally Dorling Kindersley's stronger trading period, said Peter Kindersley, the chairman, at the company's annual meeting.

Mr Kindersley told shareholders: "The continuing strength of sterling is having a greater adverse impact on margins on our trading outside the UK — some three quarters of group turnover — than was originally anticipated."

He said that turnover through DKFL, the family learning business, although still growing well, would be below previous expectations.

Dorling Kindersley has appointed two new executive directors, David Houston and Alan Luce. Mr Houston's appointment as group finance director, in succession to Peter Gill, will take effect next year. Mr Luce's appointment is with immediate effect.

Bodycote to save underwriting fees

By OUR CITY STAFF

BODYCOTE International, the engineering group, expects to save some £1.25 million in underwriting fees through its deeply discounted non-underwritten £90.3 million rights issue.

John Chesworth, managing director, said the 50p-a-share, one-for-four rights issue would fund the £60.7 million acquisition of Hit, the French thermal coatings group. The remainder of the funds would be for further acquisitive moves. He said that the board was looking to complete "several additional acquisition opportunities".

Bodycote is backing the rights issue with a pre-tax profits forecast for the current year of not less than £47 million and a final dividend payment of 0.5p a share. Mr

Chesworth said he would be "very surprised" if the rights issue was not supported by its main institutional shareholders, which include Robert Fleming and Prudential Corp. which respectively speak for about 10 per cent and 6 per cent of the shares.

"The Hit deal will give Bodycote another good profit stream and follows on from our acquisition of Brukens last year," he said.

In 1996 Bodycote called on shareholders for £110.2 million in a one-for-three rights at 40p to help to finance the £57.5 million acquisition of Brukens, the Scandinavian group. The Hit deal will give Bodycote clear leadership in France in the contract heat treatment market.

MoD deal funded by £1bn issue

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

ANNINGTON HOMES, which last year bought the Ministry of Defence homes portfolio, is preparing a £1 billion securitised bond issue to complete its funding of the £1.66 billion deal.

Annington is expected to come to the market in about two weeks selling bonds backed by income streams on the properties, including the portion of the estate that generates non-guaranteed rent.

Annington made a £900 million bond issue in October covering the part of the estate whose rents are still guaranteed by the MoD.

Annington was set up last year by Nomura, the Japanese bank that owns 75 per cent of the company, to manage a portfolio of more than 57,000 homes bought from the MoD.

The sale of the homes came under political fire. Critics claimed that the former Government sold them too cheaply. Annington has already sold about 340 homes for £10 million and has 2,400 to put on the market. The MoD pays it rent of £107 million.

Bidder unmoved by Colloids results

By OUR CITY STAFF

HERCULES, the unwanted £1 billion bidder for Allied Colloids, responded to the announcement of a 52 per cent rise in pre-tax profits at its target by remaining convinced that its 155p-a-share bid was generous.

Allied Colloids shares, however, switched the other way, rising 1p to 169p after the group revealed interim pre-tax profits of £32 million, in line with analysts' expectations.

Analysts noted an increase in margins. One said: "I would expect Colloids to amplify some of the backbone of these results as the basis for



Farrar: call to reject offer

setting out the main plank of the defence document." He added that the rise in operating margins to 15.1 per cent from 11.3 per cent is "clearly a trend that is very welcome".

The analyst explained that historically margin growth, not sales growth, had been the problem with Allied Colloids since raw materials costs increased a couple of years ago. However, doubt was cast on the sustainability of the margin increase by one analyst, who pointed out that margins at CPS, a recent acquisition, were about 18 per cent and so its integration had artificially increased group margins.

The defence document from David Farrar, chief executive, and the rest of the Allied Colloids board must appear on or before December 10. In the meantime the interim dividend rises 13.3 per cent to 0.725p.

Mr Farrar said: "We will be communicating with shareholders shortly to explain that they should reject this offer because we believe that we can deliver better value to our shareholders as an independent company. We continue to urge shareholders to take no action in respect of the offer."

Johnsons deal lifts Dawson

By CHRIS AYRES

SHARES in Dawson Holdings, the information services provider listed on the Alternative Investment Market, rose 15p to 210p after it unveiled a deal to buy the news wholesale business of Johnsons News for £32 million.

The deal will give Dawson, whose news wholesale business is the country's third largest, about 20 per cent of the UK market, with sales of £529 million. The company also specialises in updating lending and collecting systems for libraries.

Dawson said that the purchase of the business, which has turnover of £210 million, would delay its planned move to the main market until later in 1998. The acquisition will be funded by £28 million in cash and the issue of two million new shares.

Peter Brown, chairman, said: "The geographical fit of the two operations is excellent and the strengthened resource — particularly in systems and information technology — will enable the group to continue its investment in improved services for publishers and retailers alike."

Record results from Siebe and still growing.

In Russia, Siebe is helping to automate baby food factories to meet that nation's growing needs.

Interim results for the six months ended 30 September, 1997	6 months to 30.9.97	6 months to 30.9.96	% change 1996-1997
Turnover (£m)	1,706.5	1,471.4	up 16.0%
Pre-tax Profit (£m)	221.7	190.4	up 16.4%
ROS	13.0%	12.9%	
Earnings per Share (pence)	27.7	24.0	up 15.4%
Dividend per Share (pence)	5.4	4.9	up 10.2%

"Siebe continued to make considerable progress in the first half of the current year as witnessed by these results. Earnings per share of 27.7p were up again strongly, this time by 15.4%. Excluding the impact of adverse translational exchange rates, underlying earnings per share were up by 26.3%. So far as the balance of this year is concerned, organic order backlog growth continues across the Group and second half trading is off to an excellent start. The economies of North America and the UK are strong and key parts of Continental Europe are looking more robust. We do have some concerns about our Far Eastern markets, but at this point the region continues to show good overall growth for Siebe. Volatile exchange rates are likely to be a continuing factor in the Group's reported results but here too we are well positioned to respond to this issue. Having taken account of all these factors we are confident that Siebe will deliver another outstanding performance for the current year."

Barrie Stephens, Chairman.

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Rivals may lobby over BBC

By RAYMOND SNOODY
MEDIA EDITOR

COMMERCIAL media organisations meet later this month to consider whether further regulations are needed to prevent the BBC "distorting the market" by new and planned commercial ventures.

The ITV Association, the body representing the ITV companies, and leading magazine companies such as the National Magazine Com-

pany and Emap are expected to join the Commercial Radio Companies Association in looking at the present impact of the BBC on the market.

The previous Government encouraged the BBC to move into commercial ventures to try to subsidise the licence fee — a policy that the present Government seems to share.

The point of the meeting later this month is to see whether there is enough common ground between com-

mercial television, commercial radio and magazine publishers to come together to campaign on the issue.

Two approaches are likely to be considered. One is to approach the Government to say that the commercial activities of the BBC, the UK's largest media organisation, should be more tightly controlled.

The alternative is to say that if commercial organisations are to continue to face in-

creased competition from new subscription and advertiser-financed channels launched by the BBC then commercial companies should have greater freedom to develop their businesses.

A number of large commercial radio stations further add that BBC Radio 1 should be privatised and sold off. This would mean extra competition in the short term but would in the end extend the power and reach of commercial radio.

Hunt for detail in national jobs strategy



JANET BUSH

The Government's role in promoting and preserving jobs is now firmly in the spotlight. The current focus for debate is the fate of Britain's coal industry, with reported splits in the Cabinet on whether the Government should act to save miners' jobs serving to remind us all of old divisions between interventionism and laissez faire.

Coal is a tough political issue for Labour, not just because of the threat to 5,000 jobs but because the industry's demise has been hastened by the design of Conservative privatisation of the electricity sector. Old Labour is on the march, breaking free from the Government's stranglehold on backbench (or indeed any dissenting) opinion to fight for a traditional constituency.

Messrs Brown and Blair are unlikely to respond to calls for large amounts of government money to save coal. They have not worked so hard to shift new

Labour away from its past to fall at the first hurdle. Part of their thinking, as ever, is about presentation and style. Cool Britannia is in the business of promoting trendy, entrepreneurial industries such as film and design, not dirty old industries such as coal.

Some would argue that Government shouldn't intervene at all but, even in this era of liberal economics, it seems entirely legitimate for Government to attempt to maximise employment opportunities. New Labour's obsession with image makes it hard to determine whether there has been any consistency in its efforts so far. Each industry which lobbies on the grounds of saving jobs has to be examined with a cool head.

Thousands of jobs are deemed to be in the hands of government

polymakers. Should it save 5,000 jobs in mining by subsidising coal, or a potential 16,000 jobs in aerospace by supporting the new generation Rolls-Royce Trent engine, or an estimated 50,000 jobs in the design and manufacture of racing cars, or even the 90,000 jobs which the new Union of Country Sports Workers says are at risk from the banning of fox hunting and other forms of hunting, shooting and fishing?

The Government's championing of creative industries over old industries fits perfectly into the image that it is manufacturing of a new, modern Britain, but to be fair, it also has some substance. There are some good arguments why Britain's coal industry should be allowed to wind down, not least that gas is cheaper and cleaner

and the Government is committed to tough targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The environment is a compelling argument against coal and, to those who argue against over reliance on a single source of fuel, why not plough more government money, if it is available, into the development of alternative energies.

The creative industries are, as Gordon Brown has said, something that Britain is very good at and which should be encouraged. These are the jobs of the future. Quite so. But it would be quite wrong for the Government to offer anything but carefully targeted help. The constant moan of the film industry is that Britain can't finance its own domestic film-making despite having many of the best technicians, animators, directors and actors in the world. But, in a global marketplace for skills, there is no reason why their job opportunities shouldn't continue to flourish even if financing comes from elsewhere. At the risk of being charged with cultural philistinism, surely the priority should be to ensure that excellent training of our experts is available

rather than financing films on these shores for reasons of sentimental cultural nationalism.

Success, in itself, argues against government hand-outs. This is what makes the decision to exempt Formula One from the ban on tobacco advertising so mystifying. Britain boasts a £1.3 billion industry in the manufacture of racing cars, half of which is exported. Ninety per cent of all race and rally cars are made in Britain. This world-beating expertise is surely not going to lose its market even if we lose the British Grand Prix from Silverstone.

The same argument could be employed to question the recent £200 million grant to Rolls-Royce. The company assured the Government that it has a ready market for its new engines and that its

investment would be returned with interest. It therefore seems odd that the company felt it needed a boost from the Government. Nevertheless, if any industry is a legitimate candidate for a public/private partnership, one which is of strategic national importance (and a very large employer) is probably it.

So what, amid these great matters of state, can be said about the hunting lobby which has argued against the hunting bill on the grounds of jobs lost to the countryside? The Government first has to take an objective look at estimates of job losses of 90,000 and upwards. The rural, agricultural and allied workers' section of the Transport and General Workers' Union puts the number of jobs tied solely to hunting at 200. Then it should ask itself whether field sports is of strategic importance to Britain. In this case, at least, the Government ought to feel free to follow its populist instincts.

Clouds over coal future matched by disenchantment with Labour

Miners want the focus on energy policy and not RJB, Christine Buckley says

It is grey and overcast in Rossington, a mining village south of Doncaster. Inside the half-empty welfare club, miners feel the presence of a bigger cloud — the one hanging over the future of the coal industry.

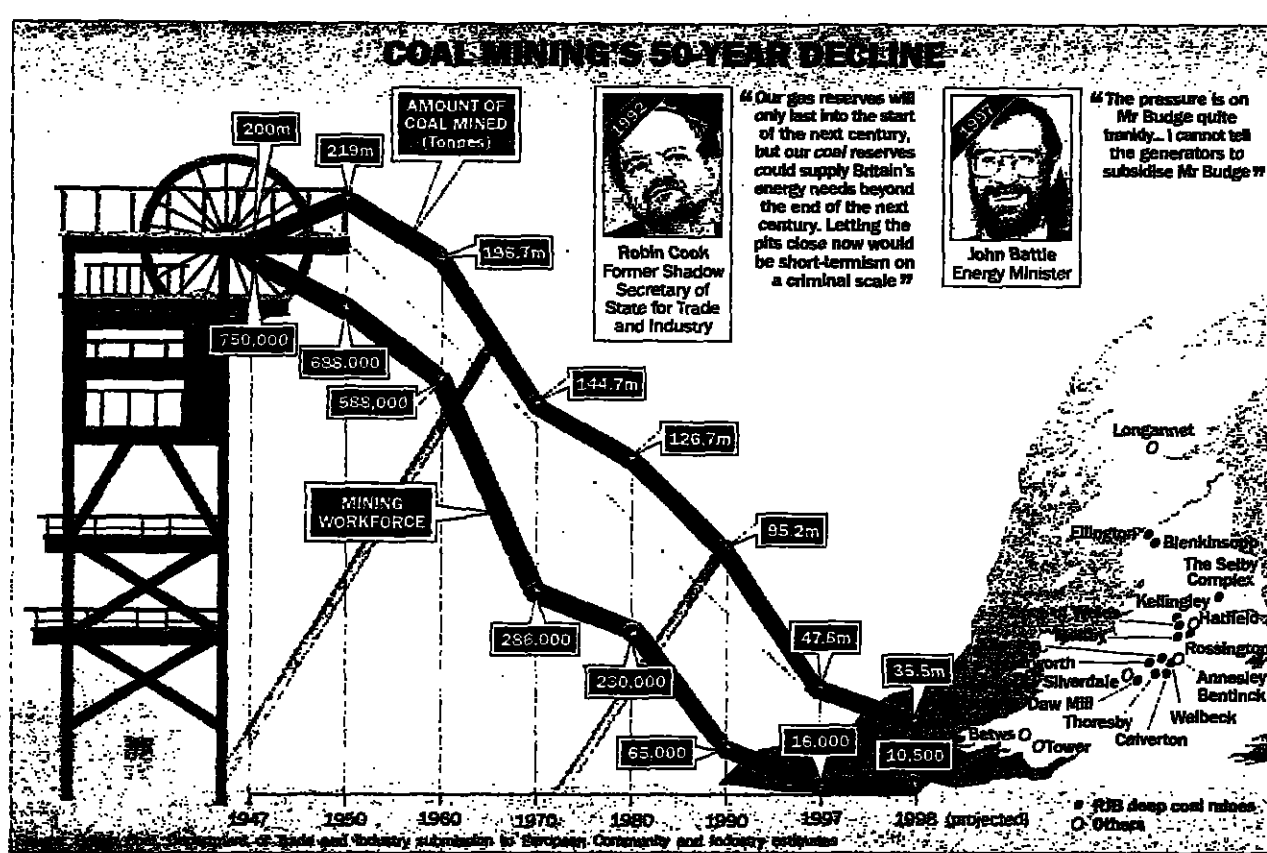
Kevin Rowe has worked at the colliery for 19 years barring a brief spell when it was mothballed before being reopened by RJB Mining. For him the uncertainty that engulfs the industry has an all-too-familiar feel.

The latest crisis may not be a surprise given power generation's dash for gas. But the fact that it is unfolding under a Labour Government is a surprise. Mr Rowe said: "The uncertainty is even worse now than under the Tories. Then we had the Tories against the miners but now it seems like the Labour Party is against Richard Budge. It all seems very personalised and we are just pawns in this. The Labour Government seems to have washed their hands of us."

Today, along with hundreds of other miners, Rossington workers will go to the Commons, scene of the Trade and Industry Select Committee inquiry into coal, to lobby for action by ministers.

Miners at Rossington are hopeful the pit's plentiful reserves will survive off-inshore closure in the shutdowns expected to be announced shortly by RJB, and that the village will be spared the desolation of others nearby when their main source of employment went. The hope is shared by other Rossington residents fearful that the hallmarks of high regional unemployment — crime and drug use — will arrive on their doorsteps. The deprivation can be seen around Doncaster in areas such as Armthorpe, Bentley and South Elmsall.

When production stopped at Rossington before RJB bought the business a couple of workshops were built by English Partnerships to encourage miners to start new trades.



Nobody bothered, says John Blakey, who has been at Rossington for 22 years, because there was no point. Without the mine, the lifeblood of the village was gone and there was little prospect of creating a new business that stood any chance of survival.

The men who work at Rossington — and many more in the rest of the industry — are clinging to the hope that their mines will survive. Most have abandoned the hope they had in the Labour Party. They are disillusioned that the row over the coal crisis, which could soon see the shutdown of eight to ten pits, has been pointed by the Government as a showdown with the profitable RJB, which is supposedly asking for subsidies. They want the debate to focus on an energy policy that Labour promised but which they say it has not delivered.

Charlie Ross, 23 years at Rossington, says: "Look at all that Cook said [when Robin Cook ruled at the Commons] a showdown with the Conservatives for the pit closure programme and now they are sitting back and letting it happen. I believe there is animosity between John Budge [the Energy Minister] and Richard Budge."

Alan Horner, a miner for 25 years, argues: "It isn't Richard Budge or the Tories that we are talking about, it is Great

Britain because ultimately the country will pay for the pit closures. We will pay more if we are reliant on imported fuels because if you close the pits you can only rely on imported fuel."

The Government has pledged, on many occasions, an energy policy that is diverse, sustainable and secure. But its critics say it is doing nothing to put that into action. Meanwhile, the rush to gas by power generators gas threatens to make the country over-dependent on that fuel, in a similar way to its over-dependence on coal in the 1980s.

was produced by British Coal. Last year it was just 31 million tonnes. Next year, according to Department of Trade and Industry figures produced for the European Commission, just 20.75 million tonnes will be deep mined.

The shrinking market has brought coal to a new crisis after RJB failed to win sufficient contracts for the capacity it has available. Pit closures seem an inevitability unless the Government introduces measures to secure greater demand. Until recently there had seemed no sign of this. The Department for Trade

policy entirely in hock to the market may also have begun to focus minds. Now a programme to look at ways of ensuring the medium-term future of coal is under way. It may be too little and it may be too late, but it is all there is on the horizon for coal.

The Government has done much to emphasise how coal companies must be price competitive to secure contracts from the privatised generators, which have no such obligations. The coal industry argues that there is little point in bringing down coal prices if those reductions are not passed on to electricity customers. Central to the whole issue of the size of the market and the role of coal in an energy policy is the argument that the market is rigged for gas generation and that the lack of regulation in generation allows power producers to keep reduced coal costs as profits.

Coal producers are forced to compete with falling world coal prices, which is largely driven by countries such as Australia, South Africa and the United States where the industries are relatively new and coal is cheaper to produce. UK coal also has to contend with supplies produced from Germany, where the industry is subsidised by the Government.

Midlands Mining has just opened a new face at Annesley Beninck and with production slower initially on new faces it is all hands to the pump. Annesley, one of the Midlands' two mines acquired from the five owned by the collapsed Coal Investments, supplies PowerGen in a five-year deal. Peter Dawson, under manager in charge of the new face, is at the cutting edge, quite literally. His job is to make sure the massive cutting arm churns out the coal safely. It is a job done in cramped surroundings, deep in the 680-metre mine.

At this time of the year the men on day shift never see daylight all week. They arrive in the dark, descend into the dark and emerge into the dark. But, says Mr Dawson, the day shift has been going home much later as the new face moved close to production. They have been keen to see the coal start to come off the face.

Chris Smith, Annesley's manager, only recently rejoined mining after a three-year spell in the car industry. He came back to a job he enthuses about. Colliery management is an unusual mix of strategy, geological challenges and hands-on management. It is one of the few managerial roles where the boss must be able to do any job underground.

The worst moment of Mr Smith's career was during the British Coal closures when he had to deal with miners who wept at the loss of their jobs and the lack of prospects. Mines tend to be in areas where there is no other key employer.

But Mr Smith's spell outside mining has given him a sharpened sense of the market and the customer. This, he believes, is a big part of coal's survival in a changing energy market. He says: "There still is a future for coal providing that we recognise what the market size is. I don't believe there can be an artificial market created. What we are really competing in is world markets, not a home-based one."

Annesley, which was first sunk in 1965, is the country's oldest colliery. It began what is the world's oldest coal industry. And with about 20 years worth of reserves at its disposal, Mr Smith believes that Annesley could be both Britain's first — and last — large-scale deep mine.

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Look at all that Robin Cook said... now they are sitting back and letting it happen

It has been estimated that in a few years imported gas could account for up to 80 per cent of the UK's generation needs. With home gas reserves estimated as low as 13 years if heavy use is made of them then Britain will quickly become dependent on imported gas. Many industry watchers warn that such a predicament will leave the UK vulnerable to sudden fluctuations in price.

Coal burn in generation has fallen dramatically over recent years. In 1989 nearly 80 million tonnes of deep-mined coal

and Industry, rather than arrest the switch to gas, has approved six new gas-fired stations since Labour took office in May. The Government's onerous environmental commitments have seemed to spell yet more bad news for coal.

Now, however, there are signs the Government could be ready to map out some sort of future for coal. The Cabinet has been concerned with the political fall-out from thousands of miners losing their jobs. The danger of an energy

policy entirely in hock to the market may also have begun to focus minds. Now a programme to look at ways of ensuring the medium-term future of coal is under way. It may be too little and it may be too late, but it is all there is on the horizon for coal.

The Government has done much to emphasise how coal companies must be price competitive to secure contracts from the privatised generators, which have no such obligations. The coal industry argues that there is little point in bringing down coal prices if those reductions are not passed on to electricity customers. Central to the whole issue of the size of the market and the role of coal in an energy policy is the argument that the market is rigged for gas generation and that the lack of regulation in generation allows power producers to keep reduced coal costs as profits.

Coal producers are forced to compete with falling world coal prices, which is largely driven by countries such as Australia, South Africa and the United States where the industries are relatively new and coal is cheaper to produce. UK coal also has to contend with supplies produced from Germany, where the industry is subsidised by the Government.

when he had to deal with miners who wept at the loss of their jobs and the lack of prospects. Mines tend to be in areas where there is no other key employer.

But Mr Smith's spell outside mining has given him a sharpened sense of the market and the customer. This, he believes, is a big part of coal's survival in a changing energy market. He says: "There still is a future for coal providing that we recognise what the market size is. I don't believe there can be an artificial market created. What we are really competing in is world markets, not a home-based one."

Annesley, which was first sunk in 1965, is the country's oldest colliery. It began what is the world's oldest coal industry. And with about 20 years worth of reserves at its disposal, Mr Smith believes that Annesley could be both Britain's first — and last — large-scale deep mine.

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Old men forget

NOW the Guinness report is out in the open, and the guilty men have been duly named and shamed, perhaps a little more ancient history involving Jack Lyons, one of the chief protagonists, might now be made public. Lyons, of course, was made prison but, fined £3 million seven years ago because of his precarious state of health. Now a hale and hearty 81, he requested only last week the chance to put the whole Guinness business behind him and get on with what is left of his life. But there is still the matter of the Grosvenor Group, an engineering business that came to grief in the mid-1980s and, the Lord is praised, in 1986 was rescued by Robert Maxwell.

One Major Nigel Chamberlayne-Macdonald was a former chairman of Grosvenor, and a director of J Lyons Chamberlayne, the private company that received some of the Guinness cash. Another director was Tony "The Animal" Parnes. The Department of Trade and Industry took various statements from those involved over a possible prosecution of Lyons for insider trading in Grosvenor shares. A report by inspectors appointed under section 177 of the Financial Services Act was produced but, alas, the Act itself precludes its publication. So we will never know just what happened. Unless Lyons, who was last week much inclined to discuss his role in the Guinness affair, would care to enlighten us?



is his mother's cousin. All perfectly above board, though. Merrydown, far from having its roots in some medieval clan-vat, was founded in 1946 by Ian Howie and Jack Ward, the former an amateur wine-maker, the latter a former POW and serial escaper who used to make the stuff in the camp. They set up in business together, and Howie married Purdy's mother, who was Ward's cousin.

savings account. He was nervous, hesitant and distinctly tetchy with anyone who sought too much detail. And who could blame him? Labour lost the election before last because they reckoned anyone earning more than £30,000 was filthy rich, and it fell to the £12 million offshore trust fund man to provide a new definition of the term. It seems anyone with investments worth more than £50,000 in a PEP is entitled to scant sympathy as they are forced to take action to avoid huge tax bills by the millennium.

But why on earth subject Robinson, an amiable cove and free with the keys to his holiday villa if you know him well enough, to such an ordeal, and so soon after being ousted by the press? Surely the job could have gone to Dawn Primarolo, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, who has responsibility for tax and is hardly known as a member of new Labour's Plutocrat Tendency?

● SOMEONE else who looked as if he would rather be anywhere else was Colin Smith, chief executive of Safeway, at the company's Christmas party for the press earlier this week. Smith has always struck me as cheerful enough in the past, but I am told he was distinctly lacking in the usual Christmas cheer. I don't suppose it was anything to do with all the trouble Safeway has been experiencing of late — that failed Asda merger, the profits warning. Cheer up, Colin — no one blames you for everything.

Hassall factor

EVERY BERKEL makes industrial weighing machinery. George Simpson — now Lord Simpson of Dunkeld — last year, put in a couple of lieutenants to restructure it. According to an internal GEC memo, the work is done and they are on their way. The troublemakers are Mike Hassall, managing director, and Ian Slaughter, commercial director. Presumably Hassall provided the trouble and Slaughter did the shooting.

MARTIN WALLER



Lord Simpson: the GEC chief weighed in at Avery Berkel

An alternative for supporters of mutuality

From Mr David Holladay
Sir, I read of the continuing threat to mutual societies of all types and wonder if there may be a card which those wishing to remain with a mutual association might play.

To date we have been offered Hobson's Choice when a society demutualises. But it seems to me that as an alternative to a windfall payment, those wishing to remain members of a mutual association could elect to have their mortgages, investments and pensions transferred to another existing or new mutual fund, at the expense of

the society wishing to demutualise, in lieu of a payment which effectively entitles them to remain with their original financial institution in its new guise.

True, the temptation of a whacking great windfall is considerable, but those valuing the mutual status could thus have a comeback against carpetbagging — especially if such options to remain with a mutual organisation received official backing.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID HOLLADAY,
95 West Graham Street,
Glasgow.

Danger of imposing a 'married persons tax'

From Mr Philip Johnson
Sir, Suggestions that Labour may follow the US example in the overhaul of the present system of family credit, and might also end independent taxation of husbands and wives, would be a direct attack on married couples were then to end, or our financial circumstances enabled us comfortably to pay what would be a discriminatory 'married persons tax', we would prefer it to be this way.

Successful Governments' fiscal policies have penalised married couples as a soft target. Gordon Brown should appreciate that a large constituency of married middle-class working couples voted them in.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP JOHNSON,
Parsonage House,
Church Street,
Henfield, West Sussex.

maintaining married but being pushed very hard financially or obtaining a quickie 'divorce of convenience' to benefit from separate taxation status, we would probably opt for the latter.

If combined taxation on married couples were then to end, or our financial circumstances enabled us comfortably to pay what would be a discriminatory 'married persons tax', we would prefer it to be this way.

Successful Governments' fiscal policies have penalised married couples as a soft target. Gordon Brown should appreciate that a large constituency of married middle-class working couples voted them in.

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"The good news is at least all our assets are liquid"

Williams optimism cheers the market

By OUR CITY STAFF

SHARES in Williams, the former conglomerate, rose 8½p to 328½p after the security and alarm services group released a positive trading statement that reassured the market.

Analysts had become concerned about the impact of the strong pound and the likely effect of the Far East economic crisis. Dealers said that they found the statement reassuring on both current trading and on growth prospects.

The analysts said that the market was heartened by the company's announcement that the promising outlook indicated at the time of the interim statement proved to be well founded, with the achievement of "pleasing" per-

formances from all divisions in the second half.

Williams said that the "prospects for 1998 are good". According to analysts, the main positive feature was the reassurance by Williams that recent economic turbulence in the Far East had had little effect on the group's Asia-Pacific businesses. The statement said: "Fluctuations in the value of sterling affect the translation of earnings rather than trading performance."

One analyst said: "The key point was the reassurance on the Far East. In one sense this was good news simply because it wasn't bad news."

Shares in Williams have fallen sharply in recent weeks, depressed by expectations that its profits would be hit hard by the economic problems in the Far East and sterling's continuing strength.

In its trading statement, the company said that overall demand in fire protection and security had been good.

The performance of the home improvement product division had been underpinned by continued firm demand in North America and the United Kingdom, while market conditions in France and Germany remained challenging.

In Chubb, the programme of business integration and performance improvement had proceeded well, with excellent support from the operational management team, the company said.

For 1998, Williams said that its fire protection and security businesses would continue to benefit from their strong market positions and broad product range throughout the world.

These strengths would be further underpinned by the full integration of Chubb, delivering lower costs, improved competitive positions and accelerated sales growth in many of its markets.

Eldridge in shares shake-up

ELDRIDGE POPE, operator of the Sturping Toad and Fireside Inns pub concepts, is to revamp its two-tier share structure by enfranchising its restricted voting A shares to create a single class of ordinary shares (Dominic Walsh writes).

Christopher Pope, chairman, said the proposal would open up the group to a wider range of funding opportunities to step up expansion.

The news came as the group reported a 23.6 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £5.4 million in the year to September 30. Earnings per share rose to 20.2p (16.6p). A final dividend of 3.98p, payable on February 6, makes 6.1p (5.3p). The shares rose strongly, gaining 22½p to 268p.



Steve McBrierty, left, finance director of Morrison Construction, and Fraser Morrison, chairman, are especially proud of Clydesdale Bank's new £20 note. Its

reverse side shows the Clydesdale Bank Plaza in Edinburgh, built by Morrison. In the half year to September 30, pre-tax profits rose 40 per cent to £6.68 million.

on sales up 27 per cent to £156 million. A half-year dividend of 130p, up from 1.64p, is to be paid out of earnings up 44 per cent to 6.77p.

Ericsson confirms 10,000 jobs to go

FROM OUR FOREIGN STAFF

ERICSSON, the Swedish telecoms group, confirmed yesterday that it was planning to cut up to 10,000 more jobs in the future, part of a restructuring plan started two years ago in its Infocom division.

The company was responding to a suggestion that about 10,000 new cutbacks were planned in coming years. Karin Almqvist Liwendahl, a company spokeswoman, confirmed that the group was planning further cutbacks, but emphasised that this was not new.

"This is not something we are just doing out of the blue.

This is part of an ongoing process," she said yesterday.

Ms Liwendahl said the cutbacks were started in the Infocom division in 1995 and had resulted in about 10,000 jobs being cut back. "Now we have reached the halfway point approximately. This means that in one way or another about another 10,000 people will be affected," she added.

However, she could not say over what period the cutbacks would be made. Ericsson's shares were trading four crowns lower at 320.5 (£24).

Scottish Radio still out to add stations

By CHRIS AYRES

SCOTTISH RADIO, the newspapers and commercial radio group that owns stations such as Radio Clyde, yesterday said that it is still looking to buy new stations and apply for new licences.

The company renewed its commitment to expansion as it reported a 33 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for the year to September 30, from £7 million to £9.4 million, on turnover of £37.4 million, up 32 per cent from £28.4 million.

Earnings per share were 23p, up 23 per cent from 18.7p, and a final dividend of 6.4p.

up from 5.3p, will be paid on January 28, taking the total dividend to 9.4p, up from 7.8p.

Scottish Radio said that its recent acquisitions — Downtown Radio and Cool FM in Northern Ireland — had seen a 73 per cent rise in profits. It added that its press division had benefited from printing contracts won last year with the Irish *Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror*.

The company paid off all its borrowings during the year, and now has cash balances of £1.7 million, with net assets totalling £22 million.

Hazlewood blames disposals for fall

By OUR CITY STAFF

PRE-TAX profits of Hazlewood Foods fell from £11.4 million to £10 million in the six months to September 30. The drop was put down primarily to a deepening of losses on disposals from £4.7 million to £9.5 million.

The convenience foods group's earnings per share fell from 3.09p to 2.07p, although

the group says that normalised earnings rose from 5.06p to 6.26p. The half-year dividend rises from 2.4p to 2.6p.

Hazlewood said that share buybacks, acquisitions and capital investment are all equally attractive propositions. The group recently asked shareholders at its annual meeting for permission to buy back up to 5 per cent of its

shares, sparking speculation of a full buyback.

However, John Simons, the chief executive, said: "At the moment we haven't done it [a buyback] but I think it is something we will regularly review and then take the option as and when."

He said the group has three options for the use of its cash — further capital investment,

a share buyback or acquisitions.

In the half year, the group was cash positive. Borrowings were reduced from £94.2 million to £50.7 million, while gearing was cut from 51 per cent to 28 per cent.

The group is planning the reinvestment of up to £10 million of proceeds from disposals in special projects.

LVMH sets up new cosmetics group

LVMH-Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton has formed a new fragrances and cosmetics group to intensify co-operation among its fragrances and cosmetics companies and to develop their international competitiveness. The company said that its fragrances and cosmetics group will comprise Parfums Christian Dior, Guerlain, Parfums Givenchy and Parfums Kenzo, and is one of the "most powerful operators in this business sector on a worldwide scale".

The company added: "It will aim to reinforce the fragrances and cosmetics companies' strengths by accelerating the development of synergies supporting the companies' shared commercial interests and co-ordinating their distribution strategies while preserving each brand's identity." Patrick Choel, chairman and chief executive officer of Parfums Christian Dior, has been appointed president of the new group, while Elizabeth Desvignes has been appointed the financial controller. She will continue in her previous post as chief financial officer of Parfums Givenchy until a successor has been appointed.

Pub group expands

THE OLD ENGLISH PUB COMPANY has completed the acquisition of seven individual coaching inns at a total cost of £5.89 million, taking its estate to 111 houses. The biggest of the newly acquired inns is the Cock Hotel, at Stony Stratford, Buckinghamshire, for which the company has paid £1.87 million. In all, the group is paying £4.54 million in cash and £1.35 million in shares. Barry Warwick, chief executive, said that trading in the first eight months of the current financial year was "substantially ahead of last year", with organic growth in November of 8.3 per cent on a like-for-like basis.

Richards challenge

RICHARDS, the textiles group, said it has received a requisition for an extraordinary meeting of shareholders to remove three of the company's directors and appoint three new directors in their place. The company said the requisition proposes that David Staveley, Ian Lakin and Graham Sharp be appointed to the company and Brian Gilbert, Raymond Dinsdale and Frederick Dalgarno be removed from office as directors of the company. The directors said they will write to shareholders in due course. The shares remained unchanged yesterday at 35p.

Field seeks foothold

FIELD, the paper and packaging group, is seeking to establish a foothold in the Italian and Spanish pharmaceutical packaging and labelling market by acquiring operations in Italy and Spain with a turnover level in the range of £5 million to £10 million, according to Keith Gilchrist, the chief executive. Field raised pre-tax profits 14 per cent to £12 million in the six months to October 5, on sales up 8.5 per cent to £117 million. The interim dividend rises from 3.1p to 3.4p, out of earnings up 15 per cent to 15.3p.

Amersham signs deal

AMERSHAM PHARMACIA BIOTECH, a subsidiary of Nycomed Amersham, and Affymetrix have agreed a three-year non-exclusive, worldwide sales and marketing deal. Amersham Pharmacia Biotech will act as an agent for the sale of some Affymetrix Genechip reagents, systems and software. Amersham Pharmacia will sell the Genechip product line as part of its current offering of reagents and instruments. Affymetrix and Amersham Pharmacia will co-ordinate the sales and marketing of some Genechip products.

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CHANGING TIMES

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Koike guilty plea in Japanese extortion case

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

JAPAN'S most notorious racketeer, Ryuichi Koike, pleaded guilty yesterday to extorting tens of millions of dollars from top Japanese financial firms in what has become the nation's mudiciest business scandal this decade.

On the first day of his trial in a Tokyo court, Koike admitted that he had taken payoffs from the "Big Four" brokerages — Nomura Securities, Nikko Securities, Daiwa Securities and the now failed Yamaichi Securities — as well as from commercial bank Dai-ichi Kangyo.

Koike, 54, was brought into the crowded courtroom wearing handcuffs and with a rope held by court security officials passing through his arms and tied around his waist.

After a prosecutor read out the indictments Koike admitted he had demanded compensation and received cash from the five financial institutions.

He said: "I fully acknowledge that all the statements in the indictments are true."

Prosecutors said that Koike received about 700 million yen (£3.24 million) from the four brokers in the mid-1990s in exchange for his assurances that their shareholders' meetings would go smoothly.

Koike also pleaded guilty to receiving about 12 billion yen in illegal loans from Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank (DKB). The case was adjourned after a 25-minute hearing yesterday, with the next session scheduled for January 26.

More than 30 current and former executives of the five companies have been indicted in connection with the payoffs.

Koike is a type of extortionist known in Japan as a *sokaiya*, who threatens to disrupt companies' annual meetings unless paid off. Such payoffs have been illegal since 1982, but firms have found it

difficult to cut their ties to the underworld.

Koike's methods were simple. He bought shares in DKB, then used threats of troublemaking to obtain funds from the bank. He used those funds to buy stakes in all the Big Four brokerages so he could hold their meetings to ransom.

Last week the former president of Japan's largest brokerage, Nomura Securities, and two other former senior executives pleaded guilty to paying off Koike.

Yesterday's trial was thought unlikely to lead to any further big revelations, but it was another cause for gloom in Japan's financial sector as it prepares for reforms aimed at boosting competition and raising financial standards.

In November alone Japan suffered four financial failures, including last week's collapse of Yamaichi Securities.



Police guard Samsan Bank, which has suspended operations

South Korea due to sign rescue deal

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

SOUTH KOREA will sign a bail-out deal with the International Monetary Fund today, ending a period of confusion over the fate of the package.

Lim Chang Yul, the Finance Minister, said that the agreement, still under negotiation, would not require the liquidation of any South Korean bank.

Chung Duk Koo, South Korea's chief negotiator, said the tentative agreement did not contain measures specifically aimed at the *chaebol*, South Korea's big business groups.

Mr Chung, also an assistant deputy finance minister, said the agreement contained steps directed at broad corporate activities, but would give no more details. He said that the two sides had reached a basic agreement and the negotiations would now focus on numbers.

Earlier, Kang Man Soo, the Deputy Finance Minister, said the IMF programme would contain "substantial" measures covering macroeconomic co-operation, fiscal affairs — including the budget and monetary policy — and restructuring of the financial system. He was speaking at a meeting of finance ministers

of 14 Asian countries and the United States.

In Seoul yesterday there was widespread confusion in financial markets and the Government itself about whether an agreement had been reached and what it contained. The confusion began in the early hours of the morning when Mr Lim emerged from an overnight negotiating session to announce that a tentative agreement had been reached.

Mr Lim was also the official who announced an agreement had been reached after an overnight session on Sunday. The agreement turned out to be tentative as well and later unravelled.

On November 21, the Seoul Government said it would seek IMF standby loans of \$20 billion (£5.9 billion), but Mr Lim later said the amount would be far more than that. Seoul is desperate for assistance because of a ticking time bomb with its short-term debt — the reason it called in the IMF.

Economists say South Korea's foreign debt had grown to about \$120 billion as of the end of September.

Yamaichi chief dies of fatigue

AN accountant from the failed Japanese brokerage, Yamaichi Securities, died of fatigue after working for 14 days without a break when the company folded.

The accounting section chief, 38, died at his home in Tokyo last Friday. He worked without a break from a week before the "Big Four" brokerage went under in Japan's largest post-war failure, and did not leave the office during that period.

After returning home for the first time on November 21, a week after Yamaichi announced that it was closing, he was found dead in bed the following morning, a company spokesman said. Investigators are treating the case as *karoshi*, or death from overwork. Police made no comment on the case.

The preceding day, Seiichi Tanigashira, 40, an employee at a firm affiliated with Yamaichi, committed suicide by jumping off a building in the financial district of Osaka. He was a deputy section chief at Taiheiyu Securities Co.

IMF chief sets out 'seven pillars of wisdom' for Asia

Camdessus says listen to market signals even if negative. George Sivel reports

SOUTH-EAST Asia should restructure and reform to get itself out of economic crisis, Michel Camdessus, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, said.

The Asian miracle economies have fizzled, but the region should rebuild its shattered ambitions through structural and policy changes, he said.

He was speaking to a conference coinciding with a meeting of Asian finance ministers. M Camdessus said hedge funds and other market participants were not the main cause of recent financial problems, and urged governments of the region to respect signals given by the markets even when they were unfavourable. Addressing the Business Forum of the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean), the IMF chief outlined "seven pillars of new wisdom" for the region. He said these included maintaining "an appropriate exchange rate and exchange rate regime", strengthening the financial systems and government reforms to promote domestic competition

and Vietnam. Asia has suffered currency devaluations, bank failures and sharply weakened share markets since the summer, when Thailand's economic crisis triggered an exodus of investors from the region. The problems forced Thailand and Indonesia to seek IMF aid.

M Camdessus told the gathering of Asian businessmen and government officials to "continue being market-friendly" because much of the region's success depended on the success of their markets.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Malaysian Prime Minister, has been a critic of hedge funds and currency speculators, accusing them of selling down markets to undermine his country. M Camdessus said, however, that "it would be a mistake to blame hedge funds or other market participants as the central agents of turmoil in Asia". In answer to one Malaysian, M Camdessus also said speculators were out to make money and often focused on countries with



Camdessus: advice

economic problems. He said such activities were not directed at countries "where the financial structures... are very strong". Dr Mahathir wants foreign exchange trading to be regulated, and in a speech on Monday suggested that currency trading be put under the purview of the World Trade Organisation.

In his sixth point of advice, M Camdessus said the region should provide "timely, accurate and comprehensive data", saying that transparency should be a practice in good times and in bad.

He ended his speech on a hopeful note, saying he was sure the region's crisis "will lead to renaissance", adding: "The miracle is over, but the maturity is with us."

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 3 1997

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Equities extend gains

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Heineken	44.10	+0.10	4.8	18.5
Carlsberg	43.80	+0.10	4.5	17.2
Asahi	43.50	+0.10	4.2	16.8
Daewoo	43.20	+0.10	4.0	16.5
Hyundai	42.90	+0.10	3.8	16.2

BANKS

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Bank of America	102.50	+0.50	5.2	12.5
Wells Fargo	101.80	+0.40	5.0	12.2
Citigroup	101.20	+0.30	4.8	12.0
JP Morgan Chase	100.50	+0.20	4.6	11.8
Bank of New York	99.80	+0.10	4.4	11.5

BREWERY, PUBS & REST

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Heineken	44.10	+0.10	4.8	18.5
Carlsberg	43.80	+0.10	4.5	17.2
Asahi	43.50	+0.10	4.2	16.8
Daewoo	43.20	+0.10	4.0	16.5
Hyundai	42.90	+0.10	3.8	16.2

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Bechtel	105.00	+0.50	5.5	13.0
Skanska	104.50	+0.40	5.3	12.8
Parsons	104.00	+0.30	5.1	12.5
Hochtief	103.50	+0.20	4.9	12.2
Fluor	103.00	+0.10	4.7	12.0

BUILDING MATERIALS

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Timberland	106.00	+0.60	5.8	13.5
Weyerhaeuser	105.50	+0.50	5.6	13.2
Westwood	105.00	+0.40	5.4	13.0
Boise Cascade	104.50	+0.30	5.2	12.8
Georgia-Pacific	104.00	+0.20	5.0	12.5

CHEMICALS

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Dow Chemical	107.00	+0.70	6.0	14.0
Eastman Chemical	106.50	+0.60	5.8	13.8
Chemical Bank	106.00	+0.50	5.6	13.5
Amchem	105.50	+0.40	5.4	13.2
Eastman Chemical	105.00	+0.30	5.2	13.0

DISTRIBUTORS

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Walmart	108.00	+0.80	6.2	14.5
Kmart	107.50	+0.70	6.0	14.2
Target	107.00	+0.60	5.8	14.0
Walgreens	106.50	+0.50	5.6	13.8
CVS	106.00	+0.40	5.4	13.5

ELECTRICITY

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Edison	109.00	+0.90	6.5	15.0
Consolidated Edison	108.50	+0.80	6.3	14.8
Public Service	108.00	+0.70	6.1	14.5
Exelon	107.50	+0.60	5.9	14.2
FirstEnergy	107.00	+0.50	5.7	14.0

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Intel	110.00	+1.00	7.0	16.0
Motorola	109.50	+0.90	6.8	15.8
IBM	109.00	+0.80	6.6	15.5
Oracle	108.50	+0.70	6.4	15.2
SAP	108.00	+0.60	6.2	15.0

ENGINEERING

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Bechtel	105.00	+0.50	5.5	13.0
Skanska	104.50	+0.40	5.3	12.8
Parsons	104.00	+0.30	5.1	12.5
Hochtief	103.50	+0.20	4.9	12.2
Fluor	103.00	+0.10	4.7	12.0

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Heineken	44.10	+0.10	4.8	18.5
Carlsberg	43.80	+0.10	4.5	17.2
Asahi	43.50	+0.10	4.2	16.8
Daewoo	43.20	+0.10	4.0	16.5
Hyundai	42.90	+0.10	3.8	16.2

BANKS

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Bank of America	102.50	+0.50	5.2	12.5
Wells Fargo	101.80	+0.40	5.0	12.2
Citigroup	101.20	+0.30	4.8	12.0
JP Morgan Chase	100.50	+0.20	4.6	11.8
Bank of New York	99.80	+0.10	4.4	11.5

BREWERY, PUBS & REST

Company	Price	Change	Yield	P/E
Heineken	44.10	+0.10	4.8	18.5
Carlsberg	43.80	+0.10	4.5	17.2
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BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

150%	152%	154%	156%	158%	160%	162%	164%	166%	168%	170%	172%	174%	176%	178%	180%	182%	184%	186%	188%	190%	192%	194%	196%	198%	200%	202%	204%	206%	208%	210%	212%	214%	216%	218%	220%	222%	224%	226%	228%	230%	232%	234%	236%	238%	240%	242%	244%	246%	248%	250%	252%	254%	256%	258%	260%	262%	264%	266%	268%	270%	272%	274%	276%	278%	280%	282%	284%	286%	288%	290%	292%	294%	296%	298%	300%	302%	304%	306%	308%	310%	312%	314%	316%	318%	320%	322%	324%	326%	328%	330%	332%	334%	336%	338%	340%	342%	344%	346%	348%	350%	352%	354%	356%	358%	360%	362%	364%	366%	368%	370%	372%	374%	376%	378%	380%	382%	384%	386%	388%	390%	392%	394%	396%	398%	400%	402%	404%	406%	408%	410%	412%	414%	416%	418%	420%	422%	424%	426%	428%	430%	432%	434%	436%	438%	440%	442%	444%	446%	448%	450%	452%	454%	456%	458%	460%	462%	464%	466%	468%	470%	472%	474%	476%	478%	480%	482%	484%	486%	488%	490%	492%	494%	496%	498%	500%	502%	504%	506%	508%	510%	512%	514%	516%	518%	520%	522%	524%	526%	528%	530%	532%	534%	536%	538%	540%	542%	544%	546%	548%	550%	552%	554%	556%	558%	560%	562%	564%	566%	568%	570%	572%	574%	576%	578%	580%	582%	584%	586%	588%	590%	592%	594%	596%	598%	600%	602%	604%	606%	608%	610%	612%	614%	616%	618%	620%	622%	624%	626%	628%	630%	632%	634%	636%	638%	640%	642%	644%	646%	648%	650%	652%	654%	656%	658%	660%	662%	664%	666%	668%	670%	672%	674%	676%	678%	680%	682%	684%	686%	688%	690%	692%	694%	696%	698%	700%	702%	704%	706%	708%	710%	712%	714%	716%	718%	720%	722%	724%	726%	728%	730%	732%	734%	736%	738%	740%	742%	744%	746%	748%	750%	752%	754%	756%	758%	760%	762%	764%	766%	768%	770%	772%	774%	776%	778%	780%	782%	784%	786%	788%	790%	792%	794%	796%	798%	800%	802%	804%	806%	808%	810%	812%	814%	816%	818%	820%	822%	824%	826%	828%	830%	832%	834%	836%	838%	840%	842%	844%	846%	848%	850%	852%	854%	856%	858%	860%	862%	864%	866%	868%	870%	872%	874%	876%	878%	880%	882%	884%	886%	888%	890%	892%	894%	896%	898%	900%	902%	904%	906%	908%	910%	912%	914%	916%	918%	920%	922%	924%	926%	928%	930%	932%	934%	936%	938%	940%	942%	944%	946%	948%	950%	952%	954%	956%	958%	960%	962%	964%	966%	968%	970%	972%	974%	976%	978%	980%	982%	984%	986%	988%	990%	992%	994%	996%	998%	1000%
150%	152%	154%	156%	158%	160%	162%	164%	166%	168%	170%	172%	174%	176%	178%	180%	182%	184%	186%	188%	190%	192%	194%	196%	198%	200%	202%	204%	206%	208%	210%	212%	214%	216%	218%	220%	222%	224%	226%	228%	230%	232%	234%	236%	238%	240%	242%	244%	246%	248%	250%	252%	254%	256%	258%	260%	262%	264%	266%	268%	270%	272%	274%	276%	278%	280%	282%	284%	286%	288%	290%	292%	294%	296%	298%	300%	302%	304%	306%	308%	310%	312%	314%	316%	318%	320%	322%	324%	326%	328%	330%	332%	334%	336%	338%	340%	342%	344%	346%	348%	350%	352%	354%	356%	358%	360%	362%	364%	366%	368%	370%	372%	374%	376%	378%	380%	382%	384%	386%	388%	390%	392%	394%	396%	398%	400%	402%	404%	406%	408%	410%	412%	414%	416%	418%	420%	422%	424%	426%	428%	430%	432%	434%	436%	438%	440%	442%	444%	446%	448%	450%	452%	454%	456%	458%	460%	462%	464%	466%	468%	470%	472%	474%	476%	478%	480%	482%	484%	486%	488%	490%	492%	494%	496%	498%	500%	502%	504%	506%	508%	510%	512%	514%	516%	518%	520%	522%	524%	526%	528%	530%	532%	534%	536%	538%	540%	542%	544%	546%	548%	550%	552%	554%	556%	558%	560%	562%	564%	566%	568%	570%	572%	574%	576%	578%	580%	582%	584%	586%	588%	590%	592%	594%	596%	598%	600%	602%	604%	606%	608%	610%	612%	614%	616%	618%	620%	622%	624%	626%	628%	630%	632%	634%	636%	638%	640%	642%	644%	646%	648%	650%	652%	654%	656%	658%	660%	662%	664%	666%	668%	670%	672%	674%	676%	678%	680%	682%	684%	686%	688%	690%	692%	694%	696%	698%	700%	702%	704%	706%	708%	710%	712%	714%	716%	718%	720%	722%	724%	726%	728%	730%	732%	734%	736%	738%	740%	742%	744%	746%	748%	750%	752%	754%	756%	758%	760%	762%	764%	766%	768%	770%	772%	774%	776%	778%	780%	782%	784%	786%	788%	790%	792%	794%	796%	798%	800%	802%	804%	806%	808%	810%	812%	814%	816%	818%	820%	822%	824%	826%	828%	830%	832%	834%	836%	838%	840%	842%	844%	846%	848%	850%	852%	854%	856%	858%	860%	862%	864%	866%	868%	870%	872%	874%	876%	878%	880%	882%	884%	886%	888%	890%	892%	894%	896%	898%	900%	902%	904%	906%	908%	910%	912%	914%	916%	918%	920%	922%	924%	926%	928%	930%	932%	934%	936%	938%	940%	942%	944%	946%	948%	950%	952%	954%	956%	958%	960%	962%	964%	966%	968%	970%	972%	974%	976%	978%	980%	982%	984%	986%	988%	990%	992%	994%	996%	998%	1000%
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BRIEFLY NOTED

Trill till you drop

OPERA: The 400th anniversary of the birth of opera, hitherto somewhat overshadowed by the present parlous state of certain opera houses, has at last inspired a celebration worthy of this most extravagant of art forms. Plans for a festival modestly titled *Universe of Opera* will be unveiled in Austria tomorrow. To take place over three days next July, it will bring together what its organisers claim will be more than 50 "superstars of opera", who will perform "the most beautiful arias that four centuries have produced" nightly to a 50,000-strong audience in the Vienna Praterstadion, with live television broadcasts. Those "most beautiful arias" won't include any from the work generally regarded as the first opera, Jacopo Peri's *Daphne* of 1597. Its music is entirely lost.

DANCE: Despite mixed reviews, Matthew Bourne's groundbreaking *Adventures in Motion Pictures* company seems to have struck gold again with its West End production of *Cinderella*. The show, originally scheduled to close on January 10, has been extended to February 14 at the Piccadilly Theatre. Last year Bourne's *Swan Lake* became the longest-running commercial ballet ever mounted in London, and later transferred to Broadway.

HERITAGE: The nation's "favourite historic house"? Apparently it is Brodsworth Hall in Yorkshire. Opened to the public just two years ago, Brodsworth is preserved as a time capsule of a mid-Victorian "upstairs downstairs" household, complete with all the period furniture and fittings. It won its accolade last week in the NPI National Heritage Awards, after a nationwide poll of visitors to stately homes.

THEATRE: An old London music-hall will be pressed into thespian service for the first time in more than a hundred years this month, when Fiona Shaw performs T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*. Shaw's twice-nightly run, opening on December 14, will be at Wilton's Music Hall near Tower Bridge in London. Built in 1859 and last used for public performance in 1880, it is claimed as the world's oldest surviving music-hall. Directed by Deborah Warner, the 37-minute production has already been seen in New York, Canada, Paris, Brussels and Cork.

MUSICALS: The 19-year-old model Sophie Dahl will star in a new musical version of one of her grandfather's stories. Roald Dahl's *Goldilocks* has been set to music by the Austrian composer Kurt Schwertsik, and will be premiered by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra at the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow on December 18. Sophie plays Goldilocks. It will be the Roald Dahl Foundation's fourth musical commission. The next will be an opera, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, to be premiered by Los Angeles Opera next December.

POP: Lou Reed's "perfect day" continues. With his refurbished song topping the charts, courtesy of the BBC's Children in Need appeal and an all-star cast, the Velvet Underground veteran has signed a new record deal with Reprise, and written the music for Robert Wilson's new pop opera *Time Rocker*.

COMEDY: Flushed with the success of *Popcorn*, the comedian and novelist Ben Elton has a new play in the pipeline. *Blast from the Past* will be a two-hander, to be mounted next year at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in a production by Jude Kelly. If it works, expect to see it transfer to the West End some time next autumn.

MUSICALS: It's a big month for Stephen Sondheim fans: nothing less than the world premiere of his first musical opens on December 11... at the tiny Bridwell Theatre in London. *Saturday Night* was written by the 22-year-old Sondheim in 1952 — six years before his work on *West Side Story* catapulted him to fame. The producer died before the piece could be performed in New York, and it sat in Sondheim's "bottom drawer" until two years ago, when a workshop performance of two of its songs at the Bridwell aroused curiosity. Sondheim, who is coming over for the previews, has not revised the work at all, preferring it to stand or fall on its original merits.

Why do the pop charts go silly at Christmas?

Paul Sexton looks at a very British tradition

When the Martians land and start their field survey into the habits of the British record-buying public, let us hope for the sake of our fraying credibility that they do not get their clipboards out during December. Once again, on the singles scene, 'tis the season to be jolly silly, when punters walk open-mouthed and open-walletted through a winter wonderland of Christmas caruncles.

Better hold those stories about the vibrant creativity of Britpop until the new year. For the next four weeks, our charts will have slightly less sophistication than the average chimpanzee's tea party — especially since we are now officially in the commercial stranglehold of those youthful recording discoveries Po, Laa-Laa, Tinky Winky and Dipsy.

Teletubbies Say "Eh-Oh", the debut single by the "pre-school" television tykes, was released this week by BBC Worldwide. With reported pre-sales of 400,000 copies, it looks a cast-iron bet to be top of the charts next Sunday. But this still would not guarantee the portly infants the much-prized Christmas No 1 spot, since another obligatory purchase, yet more emotive, lurks around the next corner. The Chicken Shed theatre company's *I Am In Love With The World*, the sole single release from the *Diana, Princess of Wales: Tribute* album, is released by Columbia on December 15 and seems certain to be swept to the summit.

Either way, records with such powerful emotional appeal have been enough to see off Oasis, whose *All Around The World* single is now not due for release until the new year. Bowing to a song associated with the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund is one thing. But imagine the humiliation for the Gallagher brothers of being outbid by a group of actors in Day-Glo body suits with television screens in their stomachs.



Chart-toppers in the best British yuletide tradition? Po, Laa-Laa, Tinky Winky and Dipsy — aka the Teletubbies — strut their seasonal stuff

William Hill now takes about £100,000 in bets on the festive No 1. "When we started doing it 15 years ago," says Graham Sharpe for the company, "we took about £500. Now it's the equivalent of a nice little horse race."

But if the Chicken Shed troupe does outrun the competition, punters will effectively be betting on the Christmas No 2. Aware of the record's delicate nature, William Hill is excluding it from the betting, as it did last year with the Dumbplane memorial single *Knocking On Heaven's Door*. "If the Chicken Shed record does get to No 1, we'll pay out on the No 2," says Sharpe. "If we didn't exclude it, someone would accuse us of making

money out of Diana's memory." Thus in the list of runners, Teletubbies stands at 8/13 favourite, with the Spice Girls' *Too Much* (also due on December 15) at 13/8.

But wait. Who is this coming up strong on the inside? Maureen Rees, of "world's worst driver" fame on the BBC's *Driving School* series, has remade Madness's 1982 hit *Driving In My Car*, and enters the race next Monday on ARC/Eagle Records. "I have got my eyes on the road," she wails, and with estimated retail orders of 100,000 copies, she's not lying.

Back to Po and Co. It would be a right old Ebenezer that bah-hum-bugged the harmless entertainment brought to millions by the linguistically challenged Flab Four. In a world in which such songs as *Snack My Bitch Up* routinely conjure images of aggression in the name of entertainment, many adults will welcome a three-minute excursion to Tubland.

But the inevitable creation of the tie-in single perfectly typifies the British record industry in action at Christmas. Once again, the world of low commerce has fashioned a product that parents know they must acquire in exchange for a moment's peace from the most powerful consumers in the household: the ones who wear nappies.

Retailers love it, of course. "The race for the Christmas No 1 is really exciting," says Siobhan Ennis, singles man-

ager at Tower Records in Piccadilly Circus. "At this time of year, people aren't being so serious about their purchasing. We've taken a hell of a lot of the Teletubbies record. The singles market is driven by children, and not just at Christmas."

By contrast, the American pop charts are rarely prey to the eccentricities of the festive novelty. *Billboard* magazine's Hot 100 chart ploughs through December much as any other month, and in recent years has produced such decidedly unseasonal Christmas chart-toppers as Michael Jackson's *Black Or White*.

But Fred Bronson, the Los Angeles-based editor of *Billboard*'s "Chartbeat" column, enjoys the bright colours of the British singles bazaar in December. "I'm

jealous, because it's so much more interesting," he says. "With the British chart, anything can happen. We have had our share of Christmas records in the chart in the past. But it hasn't happened so much recently."

However, if the US pop bestsellers remain relatively novelty-free at this time of year, the country singles chart becomes a veritable homeless shelter for Yuletide songs. You will kick yourself for missing them, but 12 months ago these included not only Alan Jackson's *Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer* but also Joe Diffie's *Leroy The Redneck Reindeer*. Suddenly *Teletubbies Say "Eh-Oh"* doesn't seem so bad.

Still putting out the right beam

Three tunes into their first upmarket engagement, the extended Lighthouse Family looked as though they had their cardigans on for the evening. Then out popped their breakthrough hit, *Lifted*, and rarely was a song so aptly named.

When Paul Tucker and Tunde Baiyewu and their large group tipped into *Let It All Change*, from their second album *Postcards From Heaven*, an evening of the politest coffee-table music seemed to loom. But such fears were to underestimate one of the more subtle British successes of 1996-97.

In the spring of 1994, I received a compilation tape of forthcoming releases from Polydor Records on which one song, *Ocean Drive*, seemed to glisten with sunny sophistication. It was another year before its creators were to emerge from the incubator of some careful career development: almost two before their musical key started to fit the lock of radio airplay. The strides made by the Lighthouse Family since have been quietly remarkable.

The *Ocean Drive* album is now in 1.5 million British households and has held a place in the bestsellers for 92 weeks. So it has continued with *Postcards From*

Heaven. Keyboardist Tucker announced with genuine pride that they were celebrating the news that the record had gone platinum, thus beating away the sophomore blues that often visit the follow-up album.

Furthermore, far from playing the joker too early with *Lifted*, the group industriously sustained its upbeat mood, both with newer songs such as *Once In A Blue Moon* and the recent hit *Raincloud*, and on upmarket properties from that Ocean Drive address.

Loving Every Minute even featured two guitar solos from the only man on stage with hair to let down, Phil Hudson. Meanwhile behind them, scenes of the Tyne Bridge, blurring motorways and, of course, a beaming lighthouse provided a suitably soigné backdrop.

Ocean Drive was the caper for the kind of sensible party that everyone could drive home from. The rays may not be blinding, but the lighthouse will long continue to beam.

PAUL SEXTON

AN EXCLUSIVE OFFER THE TIMES EUROPEAN SHORT BREAKS FROM £24



On the steps of Güell Park, Barcelona

This week *The Times*, with Leisure Direction, offers readers the chance to take a short break in Europe from just £24 per person, which includes one night's accommodation and return fare. Our money saving packages are available for travel up to March 31, 1998.

Simply collect four of the six tokens appearing in *The Times* this week and attach them to the booking form which will be published tomorrow and Saturday.

How the offer works
All prices shown are based on the first night's accommodation, starting a twin/double room on a bed and breakfast or room only basis, and includes the return fare for your chosen method of transport.

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THE TIMES EURO BREAKS TOKEN 3

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TOMORROW: BRITANNY AND NORMANDY

CHANGING TIMES

JAZZ: Chris Parker on a British-Finnish link, and a doughty veteran singer

Mix but no match



THE theory was hard to fault: by bringing together two of British jazz's most individual talents — saxophonist John Surman and keyboard player Django Bates — and Helsinki's Uuden Musikkilä Orkesteri, jazz links between Britain and Finland would be strengthened in a celebratory context marking the 80th anniversary of Finland's independence.

In the event, neither collaboration quite delivered. After a sprightly introductory piece, *Frozen Petals*, composed by UMO's conductor Karl Heinle, Surman was required to add his unique baritone sound to a politely funky arrangement of Miles Davis's *All Blues*. In both this and another baritone feature, the appropriately menacing *Film Noir*, however, Surman's strengths — control, dignity, tonal purity and emotional warmth — were not given sufficient scope.

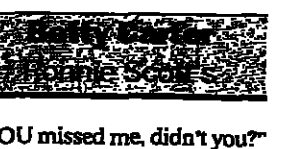
Instead, he was somewhat

inappropriately invited to stamp his individuality on proceedings through a few short solo bursts, with little time for the slow-building atmospheric playing in which he excels. Only one piece, *Northern Lights*, written by UMO pianist Kimmo Liivonen, allowed Surman sufficient space and time to air his extraordinary originality on baritone. His soprano playing was similarly under-utilised.

Django Bates had clearly decided to show off one particular facet of his art: his sense of humour. To this end, *New York, New York*, described facetiously as "a horrible, horrible old song done in a lovely new way", was pulled apart and generally abused; a controversial yachtsman, Donald Crowhurst, was remembered in a lively piece featuring the composer on English horn played with a wah-wah pedal to great effect; and the delights of teardrinking were dwelt on at some length in a rowdy encore.

Only the plaintive *Candles Still Flicker in Romania's Dark* struck a serious note, and even this contained a wholly inappropriate quote from Lionel Bart's *Do Do Anything*. The odd overall impression left was that whereas Surman had not been able to relax enough, Bates had relaxed rather too much.

Queen of jazz



"YOU missed me, didn't you?" Such was Betty Carter's ebullient greeting to a vociferously enthusiastic standing-room-only crowd at Ronnie Scott's. Then, when the noise died down: "I told Pete King [the late Ronnie Scott's partner] you would!"

Given that the Michigan-born singer always plays to packed houses at the club, it's unlikely that King needed any persuasion to engage her services for another week there, but such banter just serves to emphasise Carter's justifiably relaxed attitude these days. She has struggled through some pretty lean patches in the half-century since the beginning of her career, when she sang with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker in Detroit, and if anyone deserves a bit of respectful adulation, she does.

Of course, along with the unique voice and the sparkly stage presence, audiences have also come to associate Betty Carter with impeccable taste in accompanying trios, and her current, typically

youthful band — pianist Bruce Flowers, Neal Caine and drummer Eric Harland — looks set to emulate its celebrated predecessors for snap, precision and cultured vibrancy. Whether Carter was scatting wildly on the familiar changes of Brooks Bowman's *East of the Sun*, easing her way sensuously through Bernice Petkere's *Close Your Eyes*, or exploring all the emotional subtleties of *Body and Soul*, they were with her every step of the way, responding smartly to her constant good-natured cajoling as she prowled around the stage.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about Carter's current undisputed status as the world's greatest jazz singer is that she is, unequivocally, exactly that: a jazz singer. Audiences, initially sceptical, have slowly come round to her way of thinking, attracted not by crowd-pleasing handstands or the smooth commercialism of ersatz, cabaret-style jazz, but by wholly unexciting, full-blooded vocal improvisations that bring out every emotional nuance, investigate every harmonic possibility, of standards such as *I Should Care* or *Every Time We Say Goodbye*.

Listening to her can be demanding, even challenging, but as the unaffected warmth and devotion of her opening-night reception demonstrated, it is also deeply rewarding.

مكتبة النهر

GREAT BRITISH
HOPESRising stars in the
arts firmament:EDWARD
BURROWES

Age 12

Voice of Britten: Head chorister at St Paul's Cathedral School, he beat off 100 rivals to win the part of Miles, the doomed boy, in the recent Royal Opera production of *The Turn of the Screw*. He's back with Britten on Saturday at the Festival Hall, singing *Salutatio*, the fourth movement of *A Ceremony of Carols*, as part of the BBC Concert Orchestra's "Family Christmas Crackers" concert.

How did his opera debut go? Under Deborah Warner's direction his Baroque performances were frighteningly mature — despite his nerves. "The pressure of acting and singing in opera was totally different from performing solos in St Paul's. I was quite relieved that the on-stage lighting meant I couldn't see the audience."

Ambition? To go back to Covent Garden as a tenor and sing Peter Quint. *The Turn of the Screw*'s ghostly servant. "If all opera is as exciting as the Britten, I'd love to have a career in it."

Three of a kind: His elder brother, Connor, 14, left St Paul's in 1996, his younger brother, Patrick, 10, has been there since 1994 — the first time a sibling trio has overlapped



at the school. "Connor's voice hasn't broken yet, so with luck I've got two more years as a treble."

Are the choristers competitive? "We all know exactly how many solos each of us has sung in the cathedral. Things are apparently a bit more relaxed in the boarders' common room, where the boys sing along to the Spice Girls."

Any other achievements? He opens the batting and bowling for the school's First XI. Personal bests to date are 43 not out — against Westminster Abbey — and 5 for 2. "We usually bowl the opposition out for about 10, so we have to bat first or else the game's over in 20 minutes."

A century against Australia at Lord's or a Covent Garden triumph as Quil? "It's got to be the century, because without any real talent as a cricketer I know that is going to remain a dream."

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

Small but
perfectly
marketedCan a children's classic fight the might of
Disney at the cinema? Sheila Johnston
on the battle for young filmgoers

Parents scanning the family films on offer this Christmas face a sparse line-up. There is *Home Alone 3*, Macaulay Culkin, who starred in the first two movies to success (they remain high on the list of all-time top box-office grossers) but who is now too old for the role; *George of the Jungle*, a Tarzan spoof from Disney; *Prince Valiant*, an Anglo-Irish-German animated feature; *Spice World* the Movie; and *The Borrowers*, a \$30 million film based on Mary Norton's much-loved books about a family of tiny scavengers.

Of these, *The Borrowers* (which opens on Friday and will be reviewed tomorrow) is the only picture with a chance of mustering much enthusiasm from critics and parents. However, it differs significantly from the recent BBC series, notably in the addition of a baddie, John Goodman, the American star of *Roseanne* and *The Flintstones*, whose semi-sadistic frustration and humiliation (electrocution, burning and near-death by 400 gallons of cream cheese are involved) form the core of the plotline.

The producer is Tim Bevan of Working Title, the company behind both the film and television versions of Norton's stories. "We needed something simple in order for it to work on the big screen, and the idea was to create a chase that would carry us through the film," he explains. "We needed a typical movie-type villain. People want to be surprised, but not that surprised — you have to convince parents that it's going to be OK. It's very difficult to compete with Disney, especially in America. They've got a cartel on family films."

Other executives agree. Ian George, the director of marketing for Warner Brothers Distributors, says: "In an industry where brand names mean nothing — no one goes along to a Warner film or a Paramount film — Disney is the closest you can get." Disney has been fiercely protective of its monopoly, especially in the field of animation, which other studios such as Fox, Warner Brothers and Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks are hoping to challenge with animated features of their own over the next year. Fox's cartoon fairytale *Anastasia* has been at the centre of a battle royal in the US, where it opened last month against an arsenal of Disney releases programmed, allegedly, to crush it.

"The Disney name is incredibly powerful and well-protected," comments Daniel Batssek, the vice-president and managing director of

Buena Vista International, the studio's UK-based distribution division. "And we're not keen to let anyone join us at the top of the tree. Anyone else would do the same."

Disney's success is partly down to hard-nosed marketing techniques. Peter Hewitt, the British director of *The Borrowers*, still smarts from the memory of filming Mark Twain's American classic *Tom Sawyer* at Disney. "It was very dark and violent, like the book. But Joe Roth had just arrived [to replace the previous studio head] and he saw it more as a buddy movie. They sold it as a jolly cartoon with the copyline 'the original bad boys', a rock'n'roll trailer and a typeface on the posters that looked like *Tom and Jerry*. I'm trying with *The Borrowers* to make sure they're selling the film that was made, not just some fun movie with John Goodman."

But prestige family films remain a tricky commercial prospect. Warner's next major release, *Fairytale: A True Story*, about the two small girls who claimed to have photographed fairies, is currently playing in America. "The US campaign was purple, with a classic Disney yellow typeface," George admits. "But you have to bear in mind that it is set in 1917 in Bradford, and half the American population won't know where that is. In Britain we are going for a more traditional look. It's not the sort of film that is going to engender great poster power, but we're appealing to parents to take children along to something they know will be good wholesome fun."

When it opens here in February, *Fairytale* is likely to demonstrate another industry axiom: small girls will happily watch movies about boys, but boys are loath to return the compliment. But Warner has successfully released a suite of quality costume dramas, including *The Scarlet Empress*, *The Little Princess* and *Black Beauty*. "Our expectations were not huge, because one imagines that kids are interested only in special effects and gizmos," George says. "And three quarters of films released in the UK lose money. But we made money on all those titles."

No doubt all these difficulties go some way to explaining why, despite the current British film boom, a glance at movies in the pipeline reveals only one or two titles aimed at a younger audience. "With *Bean* and *The Borrowers* we wanted to start making family movies geared to the world mar-

For its big screen debut *The Borrowers* has scaled up the thrills with the addition of a classic baddie — but will it still be small beer?

ket," says Bevan. "We're actively looking for more projects with decent ideas and characters. But people are not writing those sorts of scripts."

But the family film market continues to expand. According to research from the advertising agency Leo Burnett, going to the cinema

— in contrast to other popular children's leisure activities like watching television — has not been hit by the rise of home computers. On the contrary, attendance by children aged between seven and 14 has grown by 23 per cent in the past ten years — the cinema remains a popular birthday outing.

Unlike adult movies, which generally mop up 25 per cent of their total box office on the opening weekend, George says children's films often do slow-burning business. But the multiplexes can programme them in matinee slots for weeks on end. And, Bevan adds, the ancillary possibilities are "huge"

— meaning the extended afterlife they enjoy through television and video sales, merchandising and franchising. It is a market that many feel British producers are foolish to ignore. As Bentley says: "The economics are in place; now we are just waiting for the right movies."

CLASSICAL MUSIC: John Allison meets an extraordinary pair of percussionists on the way to their Wigmore Hall debut. Plus opera and concert reviews

Denmark's breathless dynamic duo

The Saffri Duo defies easy definition. Just as it is difficult to tell from their seamlessly integrated performances where one player ends and the other takes over, it is hard to know exactly when their double-act began. Officially, it was with the launch of the Morten Friis-Uffe Savery Percussion Duo almost ten years ago, but the two young Danes had been playing music together since childhood. And their more streamlined, composite name reflects the musical telepathy they have developed in their mid to late twenties.

"Yes, the name fits well, we are like a tandem," says Savery. "That's right," agrees Friis. "We're like twins."

Conversation with the Saffris reveals the human phenomenon behind a musical phenomenon. The talk is almost continuous, with one picking up where the other leaves off, each supplying the missing words that the other cannot muster in English. Savery appears to be the driving force, but when the more spontaneous Friis warms to the discussion he injects a note of deadpan Danish humour.

No amount of rehearsal can explain the chemistry of their performances. Whether on a pair of marimbas or spread over a dozen or more percussion instruments, they play as one. There is a virtuosity about their act that takes the breath away, but even more exciting is the sheer musicality that shows how far percussion has come as a medium. In their arrangements for two marimbas of Bach, the parts interweaving with absolute clarity, and Chopin, full of subtle inflection, the Saffris play in a way that few keyboard players can match, and with a cool fluidity that is beguiling.

Though their battery of equipment is vast — they tour with kit weighing an impractical 1.8 tons — their art is not about the instruments themselves. At least, not any more. "We were a couple of showmen," admits Friis. "It was worse in the beginning. But when we developed as human beings and started families, we began to think differently." Their performances remain hugely impressive, not least for the way everything is played by heart. Savery feels freer to concentrate on the whole sound when he is playing from memory.

The road to international success and their current UK tour, which culminates next Tuesday at the Wigmore Hall, has been a long one. Savery and Friis met in 1977 when they joined the Trivoli Gardens Boys' Guild, an old Copenhagen institution. It was an excellent musical education,



In tandem: Morten Friis and Uffe Savery beat up a storm

says Savery. "You learn sight reading and the rudiments of music without knowing it."

Both eventually went on to the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music, the next stage in

this peculiarly Danish odyssey. Indeed, one is tempted to conclude that the Saffris could only have come out of Denmark, because of the pioneering work done there by Bent

Lyloff in establishing percussion studies. They admit that Lyloff had big ambitions for them as a duo before they realised the possibilities themselves. "At the conservatory we were both part of a percussion quartet," recalls Savery. "We were always agreeing on how it should go, but never with the others. That's why it was natural for us to form a duo. We are surprised it doesn't exist anywhere else."

Perhaps that is because a repertoire didn't exist until the Saffris created one. It is still not vast, but more than enough to fill the handful of CDs they have made for Chandos. The commission widely, yet have also broadened their musical experience by arranging works from Bach to Ravel. "Many things that would be possible to play we don't — we have to respect the composer. If it doesn't make musical sense, or the original sounds better, we don't do it."

When it comes to new pieces there are no such limitations, only physical hurdles. One of the Saffri Duo's most important collaborations has been with their compatriot Per Nørgård, who in *Well-Tempered Percussionists*, an experiment with the hidden complexities of Bach's rhythms, gave the players a challenge to relish. And Friis recalls that one of their most spectacular commissions, Jacob ter Veldhuis's *Goldrush*, was the result of telling the composer: "Do what you want. We'll find a way of making it possible."

"Sincerely," says Savery, "the word impossible doesn't exist in our vocabulary."

• The Saffri Duo are at the Ulster Hall, Belfast on Friday (01222 660788), Civic Hall, Guildford Dec 8 (01483 444553), and the Wigmore Hall Dec 9 (0171-935 2141).

TESS KNIGHTON

Method
in the
mania

one another, as this second cast does. Lowery operates on the old music-hall principle of always having another joke ready on the runway in case the first one fails to take off. He is his own designer so most of the gags are visual and demand funny performers. Peter Rose's Basilio precisely fits this bill. With fine booming bass he substitutes a round and corrupt maître d' from an upmarket restaurant for the usual seedy music master. William Dazeley in

the title role overdid *Largo al factotum*, sung full blast while getting into his trousers. He then settled down to the quick-witted and resourceful performance one expects from him. Bruce Ford, singing his hundredth *Alma viva*, took time to settle into the mayhem and was not helped by having to play his Act 1 *canzone*. By Act II he was part of the team and back to form. Eric Garrett's Bartolo is too amiable an old body and the role needs more than mere veteran status. The juggler brought in to illustrate the storm sequence could also be pensioned off.

A pity too that Bruno Campanella was not there to conduct. Antonella Allemandi's handling of the orchestra was dangerously lacking in fizz. Even so the Shafesbury staff should not subject him to noisy punters taking their seats during the overture. Make them wait outside, especially as Act I is 90 minutes. They might be punctual next time.

JOHN HIGGINS

The boys are back in town

FOR their visit to St John's, Smith Square, the Vienna Boys' Choir presented a Schubert-Abend in honour of that composer's anniversary. Schubert was a member of the choir, which is about to celebrate its quinquennial — it was founded in 1498 by Maximilian I — and the singing tradition has been more or less unbroken. This may account for the distinctive sound of the choir — sweeter than King's College, Cambridge, more fragile than Westminster Cathedral, but purer than the Escolania of Montserrat — which at its best is quite heavenly.

The boys were at their best in the two Psalm-settings that opened the programme.



Psalm 23 with rippling piano accompaniment, and the much more rarely heard Psalm 92, which Schubert set in Hebrew for his cousin Salomon Sulzer, cantor of the Jewish synagogue newly established in Vienna in 1826. The first they sang from memory, in dreamy manner, while the second, for which they were joined by the male voices of the Academy of London Chamber Choir and the soloist John Hancorn, was appropriately ardent in Schu-

bert's atmospheric evocation of the synagogue.

The blend of salon elegance and reverence in the setting of the Mass No 2 in G, and in that of the *Tantum ergo* in E flat which opened the second half of the concert, always makes me feel slightly uneasy, but would undoubtedly have been expected by the Viennese churchgoers of the day. The creamy sound of the boys en masse and of the unnamed treble soloist brought out the saccharine qualities of the music. Nevertheless, it is always good to hear the Vienna boys: long may they continue to withstand sexual equality.

Note the name of Sonia Ganassi. On her debut with the Royal Opera in exile she made it clear that she is set to join the already well-filled ranks of top young mezzo. Her voice has a rock-solid lower register and plenty of sheer above. She has the looks and vitality of the young Monica Vitti and acts like a true child of the theatre. Her Rosina is a feisty creature and it is a wonder that Dr Bartolo managed to keep her locked up indoors so long. The Act II lesson scene went even better, with Ganassi showing wit to supplement mere vocal prowess. It must have been something of a culture shock to come direct from a series of Rosinas at New York's Met to the theatre-of-anarchy *Barbiere* at the Shafesbury. But she slips nimbly into Nigel Lowery's production without turning a root of her well-coiffed hair.

Lowery's assault on Rossini was loved by some on the first night and loathed by others. It certainly works well enough with singers ready to spark off

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OVERSEAS PROPERTY TO LET

SPAIN Costa Brava, Mar de Poble, 2nd floor, wood floor, 2nd floor, wood floor. £225 pw. 0171 225 3446

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Telephone:
0171 680 6806

Crème de la Crème

Fax:
0171 782 7586

VERSATILE PA TO OWNER/DIRECTOR

VICTORIA £28,000 Package
The business interests include a growing restaurant company, and an international project financial advisory business, with a small 6 person-head office team.

The position combines shorthand heavy and sophisticated word processing and presentations, the full range of PA functions, office organisation and filing, and a 45 hour week plus some late evening and week.

You must be an experienced PA with first class MS Win95 and shorthand (60/100). A levels, highly computer literate with Powerpoint/DTP skills, and relevant large and small company experience. You should be well organised, and calm under pressure with energy, and flexibility.

If you can meet these requirements please fax letter demonstrating this, and full CV including present salary, to Mr. R. Mathrani, Chelsea Plaza on 0171 584 8595

BRIGHTPOINT

TURNING THE WHEELS OF COMMUNICATION

We are a world leader in the rapidly expanding International Cellular Distribution market. Our parent company, Brightpoint Inc, has its headquarters in Indianapolis and is a publicly quoted Fortune 500 Company, we operate in 55 countries across 6 continents.

TWO EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS (£20,000+++) (One based in Staffordshire, UK. One based in Hong Kong)

We are looking to recruit two highly able individuals to provide outstanding administrative and organisational support to the senior management of Brightpoint's International Division. You will be reporting to, and working with, our Chairman (BP Inc), CEO and President, and Vice President of International Sales.

Posessing outstanding communications and interpersonal skills and an ability to prioritise workflow while thinking on your feet, you thrive in a pressurised environment while maintaining a firm but diplomatic presence. You will have experience of dealing with Managers at a very senior level.

As an international business, linguistic ability

Interviews will be held soon commencing 8th December with a view to an early January start. If you feel you have the necessary skills and personality please send your details to Kathy England, Brightpoint (UK) Ltd, Century Road, High Carr Business Park, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST7 7TG or fax them to us on 01782 86482.



PLANET HOLLYWOOD, the high volume, international, movie-themed restaurant/retail company, is seeking an experienced bright and outgoing Personal Assistant / Development Team Administrative Coordinator in its busy European head office based in Regent Street

The role involves providing full administrative and secretarial support to the development team and the Vice President of Design and Development. In addition duties will include administrative coordination within the department, organising itineraries, liaising with our corporate office in the USA and numerous other locations worldwide. Salary £18K depending upon age and experience.

The qualified candidate will have a minimum three years experience within a demanding secretarial/administrative environment and expertise in Word Processing with Windows (WordPerfect/Word) and spreadsheets (Lotus 123/Excel). A casual but smart appearance excellent communication/organisational skills, telephone/memo capabilities and a sense of humour essential! A fluency in another European language a plus.

If you think you've got what it takes and would like to start 1998 working for a dynamic and fun company. Please send your CV and salary details to: Heidi Neal, Planet Hollywood, 84-86 Regent Street, London, W1R 5PA.

PERSONNEL OFFICER - GENERALIST

Market related salary & benefits
An opportunity has arisen for a graduate MIPD Personnel Officer, with at least 5 years generalist personnel experience, to assist the Group Personnel Manager in ensuring the smooth administration of the human resource function of this well established, successful group.

It is expected that the Personnel Officer will quickly take on more responsibility for the day to day management of the personnel function and ultimately assume the role of Personnel Manager. A knowledge of current employment law is essential together with experience in staff training and development.

Please apply in writing enclosing CV and current salary to: Moire Crudington, Group Personnel Manager, United House Ltd, United House, Goldsall Road, Swanley, Kent BR8 8EX

A member of the United House Group. We operate equal opportunities and non-smoking policies.

ROYAL BROMPTON HOSPITAL

PA/MEDICAL SECRETARIES

Consultant in Thoracic Surgery and Clinical Director
Circa £17,000 (net p/a)

Peter Goldstraw is an internationally renowned surgeon. As his clinical secretary you will be at the centre of his very busy practice - responsible for ensuring that the operating schedule and outpatient clinics are booked and running smoothly. You will also provide secretarial support in relation to his Directorate management responsibilities.

Consultant in Cardiac Surgery
Circa £17 - £20,000 (net p/a)

Neil Mead is a dynamic surgeon with a thriving NHS and private practice. In this post you will have specific responsibility for the management of the waiting list as well as providing a first class secretarial service to Neil and his clinical team.

The salaries quoted include a supplement for additional responsibilities. To succeed in either post you will be an experienced medical secretary, well organised, flexible, confident and have well developed communication skills.

For an information pack, please contact the Human Resources Department, Royal Brompton Hospital, Tel: 0171 351 8698 (24 hour answerphone). Please quote the appropriate reference. Separate applications for each post will be required. Closing date: Friday 12 December.

THE SKI COMPANY - AN OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITY FOR AN OUTSTANDING COUPLE

The Ski Company, the undisputed leader in luxury alpine holidays, is looking for a talented couple to manage its five star chalet in Klosters, Switzerland from early January 1998.

If you are aged between 25 and 40 and want to work together in an exciting environment with a possible long term ambition to own your own hotel or restaurant, there could be no better opportunity. We will provide you with the support of, and training in, a proven formula, giving you the scope to stamp your own personalities and management style on the running of "your" chalet.

However you must be outgoing, hospitable, generous and friendly, with a keen sense of professional pride. One partner must have excellent cooking skills and one must speak German.

We are a young, successful and dynamic company offering the right people an exceptional opportunity to grow with us.

For a brochure and application form, please write, enclosing your CV's to: Tony Elliott, M.I., The Ski Company, Sloane Square House, Holborn Place, London SW1W 8NS

West End Senior PA/Administrator up to £27,000 p.a

Working directly for the Chief Executive of one of the largest and most diverse private investment holding companies in the UK. Creating value through the active investment of funds and development of high growth businesses. Work in prestigious surroundings with a friendly team and manage the admin. and secretarial functions - your ideas and new systems will be welcomed. You must be a self-disciplined, bright individual with good computer skills and a lively sense of humour (essential). Only those with an understanding of confidentiality and a basic level of numeracy need apply - however you don't need to be a rocket scientist! It's a varied and quite unpredictable world so flexibility is key. If you think you meet our requirements please apply in writing enclosing your CV and current salary details to:

Diane Phillips
No. 8 Manchester Square,
London W1M 5AB.



Organise your own career PA

Based: Uxbridge

Our client is one of the world's largest high tech companies. An opportunity has now arisen for an experienced and assertive PA/Secretary to work alongside the European General Manager.

You will be required to provide full support in this fast moving environment. Embracing responsibility, you will bring initiative, flexibility and the slick organisational skills needed to contribute to the achievement of real business results. Frequent and daily liaison across Europe and North America will be required. Ideally, you will have around 5 - 8 years' experience in a similar large company environment, where you will have demonstrated flexibility and strong organisational skills, as well as the ability to work effectively under pressure. Technical skills should include knowledge of all Microsoft Office packages. Knowledge of another European language would be an advantage.

In return, our client offers a competitive salary and benefits package, as well as the chance to work in a progressive, friendly and dynamic environment where you will be given the opportunity to build on your skills and organise your own career. Please write with CV to TMP Worldwide, 32 Aybrook, London W1M 3JL, quoting ref: R1758.

TMP Worldwide

Whitby Bird & Partners ENGINEERS

Personal Assistant to Partner

With our continued growth and move to new offices we are looking to recruit a further Personal Assistant. The successful candidate will be confident and organised with excellent secretarial, interpersonal and managerial skills.

This position would suit a mature, experienced and energetic personality.

Please write to Andrew Thorp
53-54 Newman Street
London W1P 4DA
email: recruitment@whitby-bird.co.uk

OFFICE MANAGER/SECRETARY

Required for expanding Foreign Exchange market making company. A busy and extremely varied role. Some receptionist duties, good telephone manner. Windows literacy - no city experience necessary. Must be confident, enthusiastic and flexible.

Salary £16,000 plus Bonus.
Please send CV and covering letter to: Rachel Fasson, FX Ltd, America House, 2 America Square, London EC3N 2JL

VAUGHAN LTD

Leading manufacturers of traditional lighting, furniture and accessories selling to interior decorators, architects and hotel specifiers.

SALES/ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Bright, organised, flexible person required to join team in busy trade showroom. You will be responsible for displaying a wide range of UK and international accounts and must be organised and able to work under pressure.

Account handling experience is essential.
Salary £15,000 p.a.

CV's to Katherine Jefferson, Vaughan Ltd, 158-160 Wandsworth Bridge, London SW6 2JH.

SENIOR LEGAL SECRETARY

Salary £16,000 p.a.

Shorthand Secretary (with W4W). Experience in Criminal Defence and Civil Litigation essential. Non-Smokers.

Contact: Paula Jacobs 0181 5548000 (No Agencies)

VARIETY GALORE City to £23,000

We are getting more and more requests from law firms who are looking for secretaries who are professional, flexible and keen to expand their legal knowledge. As a first secretary you will experience a varied and interesting role working within many different areas of law, along with being highly regarded in the company and rewarded well. If you have experience in any area of law and have 50wpm typing, please call me for an immediate appointment.

For an immediate appointment on the above position, or if you would like to discuss any other vacancies we currently have please call ANGELA or EMMA on

0171 550 7000

ANGELA or EMMA

Strategy

Helping people win
PA TO CHARMAN
£20,000 - £22,000 per annum

Based in a smart riverside City location for the last twenty years, a dynamic international marketing consultancy is seeking a friendly and competent PA (25-35 yrs) to run the office of a busy international Charman. Ability to use initiative and work under pressure essential with experience working at Board level. Personal presentation is important combined with good shorthand (50 wpm), good typing (50 wpm) and sound knowledge of Microsoft Word 7.

Four weeks annual holiday, hours 9.00am - 6.00pm plus season ticket bus. No agencies.

If you are interested, please send your CV to: Miss Emma-Jane Cawley
General Manager
Strategy International Ltd
15, The Ivory House
St Katharine Docks
London E1 9AT

BOND STREET ANTIQUE DEALER

We require a new secretary to join our busy team just largely working for the manager of our antique glass department. The job varies from routine office work to producing catalogues, arranging and attending exhibitions and dealing with customers. The person in this field is required not only to work with complete accuracy and speed but also to be able to deal with a wide range of enquiries. Working will be considered.

Please reply with CV to: Hallett & Son (Antiques) Ltd
141 New Bond Street
London W1T 0BS

Aldrich & Company

EVENINGS ONLY
5 - 12.00AM
TO £25,000 + BANK BENS

Plus a FREE taxi home. Our client, a major investment bank that works round the clock needs a quick-thinking, well organised and flexible Secretary who can work these hours. Call Emily Aldrich.

CV to: Emily Aldrich
Tel: 0171 588 8099 Fax: 0171 588 8098

Aldrich & Company

PERSONNEL ASSISTANT
£23,000 + BANK BENS

Assist a high flying young personnel manager in all areas of HR admin. Would suit a bright graduate secretary with commercial experience and PC skills. Immediate interview. Call Sarah Turnbull.

CV to: Sarah Turnbull
Tel: 0171 588 8099 Fax: 0171 588 8098

Aldrich & Company

HIGH PROFILE PA
£22,000 + BANK BENS

Supporting the Head of Administration for the Investment Banking division. A high profile role for a practical, resourceful intelligent Secretary wanting complete involvement. Call Alex Keats.

CV to: Alex Keats
Tel: 0171 588 8099 Fax: 0171 588 8098

Aldrich & Company

PA (1-1) BOARD LEVEL
£23,000 + BANK BENS

Board level director requires a totally professional, bright PA to help with projects and provide full secretarial support. This is a career opportunity with a top investment bank. Call Alex Keats.

CV to: Alex Keats
Tel: 0171 588 8099 Fax: 0171 588 8098

SECRETARY FOR CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Secretary/PA with a pleasant, mature attitude to work for 2 partners within our firm. The ideal candidate should be fully experienced in advance Word 7 and have a typing speed of at least 50wpm. Confident telephone manner essential.

Salary circa £18,000.

Please send in full CV and covering letter FAO:

Ms Fiona Atkinson
Jayson Newman, Chartered Accountants
48 Portland Place
London W1N 4AJ

P.A. to the Chief Operating Officer

Immediate start for well-grounded "second jobber" with:
• Good interpersonal and organizational skills
• Excellent secretarial skills (i.e. shorthand)
• Fully conversant with Windows 95 (Word/Excel/Powerpoint)
• Discretion, self-motivation, commitment and enthusiasm
• Good remuneration package.

Please apply by letter and C.V. to: names of 2 referees to: Sarah Nicholas, c/o 10 Stratton Street, London W1X 5FD

SECRETARY/ADMINISTRATOR/RECEPTIONIST 18K

We require a mature, experienced person to support the Designer and Marketing Manager at our exclusive furniture showroom in Knightsbridge. We are a small, friendly company and need an intelligent, numerate, organised and efficient secretary who can deal with our exclusive clientele and manage a showroom. Proficiency in Microsoft Word and Excel is essential, as is a fast typing speed and the ability to tackle tasks from the mundane to the sophisticated. Ideally, we would prefer someone who is looking for a long term position.

If you are able to handle several different tasks whilst retaining a sense of humour and a covering letter with CV to:

Roberta O'Brien, Woodstock Furniture Ltd, 4 Wilton Street, Knightsbridge, London SW7X 8NL. NO AGENCIES PLEASE

MISS WORLD LIMITED

My secretary p.a. has been with me for 16 years. She is moving away from London and also I will leave her. Have you the skills to take her place in a position requiring good computer and typing skills and a cheerful personality and telephone manner in dealing with calls worldwide? We organise major world events and occasionally travel is essential.

Are you contemplating a change of job in 1998? If you are and have the skills would it not be worth your while coming to discuss this very interesting position?

Apply in writing with CV to: Eric Morley, Chairman, Miss World Group, 21 Golden Square, London, W1R 3PA

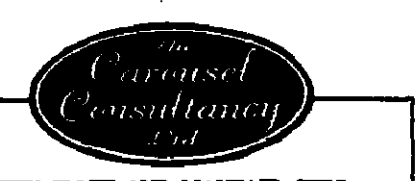
OFFICE MANAGER

£16,000 - £20,000 p.a. + Bonus
Seeking opportunity to play a key part in setting up and running a new City-based consultancy. Site office management responsibility, reporting to the principals. Proposed start January 1998.

Ready you will be highly motivated and have:
• A confident manner with clients
• Good organisational skills
• Computer literacy (Word, Excel, etc.)
• An interest in a customer-focused business

* Experience in setting up and maintaining effective office systems
The office will be fun and fast-paced. Generous bonuses will be paid to the successful candidate.

Please send your CV to: Personnel Manager, Gemmon Holdings, 28 Brompton Square, EC3N 3QH.



CITY SLICK AND MAYFAIR CHIC

Banking Team Sees £25,000 package
Prestigious office, fun working environment and one of the best benefits packages in London await Secretaries with good typing speeds, Powerpoint skills and at least five years' secretarial experience.

PA to Headmaster £21,500 package
Mayfair based company requires a bright, proactive PA with their and confidence to chat easily to clients and colleagues as well as organise the office and type presentations, reports and CV's.

Tel 0171 734 7277 Fax 0171 734 7278

Telephone:
0171 680 6806

Crème de la Crème

Fax:
0171 782 7586

INVOLVEMENT £21,000

PA role including personal work for two directors with many business interests including non-executive directorships in film and communication companies and charities. This position offers lots of variety and involvement. 80wpm shorthand.

Please telephone 0171 495 2321
Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

MARKETING to £30,000

A challenging and exciting new role working for this trading company. If you have at least 18 months experience of marketing in a textile related industry, you could make the most of your knowledge helping to develop the European client base.

Please telephone 0171 495 2321
Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

TEMPORARIES

- Up to £10 an hour
- A choice of bookings
- Bonuses
- Holiday pay
- Training
- Temp to perm opportunities

0171 495 8070 - West End Office
Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

VICTORIA £25,000 + bonus,

pension, BUPA, gym etc. Utilise your excellent senior level experience within this international consultancy. Supporting board level partner, supervising secretaries and generally being the divisions lynch pin.

Good career prospects.
55wpm typing. MS Office.
Please telephone 0171 495 2321
Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE £20,000

Fantastic career opportunity to join this famous exhibition company in a key high profile role. With extensive international liaison, organising travel and hospitality, there will be plenty of variety and scope to develop your skills. 50/55.

Word for Windows
Please telephone 0171 495 2321
Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

Face the music.

£21,000 West End
Work at the sharp end as second secretary to the Chairman of this international music company. You will combine using your traditional secretarial skills with your ability to multi-task and prioritise with ease. This presents the opportunity to learn whilst working at the highest level. It literacy plus 100 wpm shorthand essential. For further information call Liz Rickard on 0171 434 4512.

Crone Corkill
Pure Recruitment Skill

www.cronekorkill.co.uk

Executive Assistant.

£Negotiable City
European Bank requires an Executive Assistant to help set up a new venture. Working alongside the Head of the Area responsibilities will include setting budgets, implementing systems and decision making. An excellent opportunity to join this new and exciting division. An understanding of banking is essential. Skills required: A Level calibre, 100 S/H, 70 wpm. Age: 28-45 yrs. Please call Tracy Wakerley on 0171 390 7000.



OPENING IN THE DOCKLANDS LEADING US BANK

SECRETARIES	Investment Banking Division	£24,000 to £26,000
BILINGUAL SECRETARIES	Specialist/French/Dutch/German/Italian	£24,000 to £24,000
INHOUSE LEGAL SECRETARIES	Banking/Legal Division	£24,000 to £24,000
NIGHT SECRETARY	Legal Division	£25,000
RECEPTIONIST	Front of house + Executive Floor	£15,000
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT	Equity Research Department	£25,000
ADMINISTRATOR	IT Training Department	£25,000

Benefits to include £2000 Housing Allowance, Gym Membership, Bonus, etc. Retirement, Life Assurance, Private Health, Season Ticket Loan, and above all a professional and highly successful organisation to join. Join the best! For an immediate application please send your CV to one of the countries leading names within Investment Banking please telephone Tracy or Lisa without delay.

0171 658 0303 Fax: 0171 658 1300
Rogers House, 111 London Wall, London EC2Y 1ET

THE INVESTMENT BANKING (EC3)

1. Traditional P.A. - £22,000 + Bank Bonus. Shorthand/typing skills for highly involving Executive Secretarial role within a leading Investment Bank.
2. Team Secretary - £18,000 + Bank Bonus. Dynamic proactive role for an outgoing personality with 60wpm typing, MS Word to assist the Tolden.
For an instant interview contact Michelle Bradley at Ritz Recruitment
Tel: 0171 929 5250 or fax CV's on 0171 929 1376.

GLOBAL CONSULTANCY

£28,000 Package
A unique Management Consultancy based in Knightsbridge is looking for a dynamic PA/Office Manager to run their extremely successful world-wide headquarters. You will be supporting four Consultants, organising their hectic international schedules, while also organising their bi-weekly international conferences. The role offers the opportunity to organise conferences, co-ordinate marketing weeks and to deal on a daily basis with senior executives in the USA. The ideal person needs the ability to produce a challenging workload and be looking for a role which they can expand and develop. For this and many more challenging opportunities please call us now.
Committed to equal opportunities
0171 814 0800
Angela Mortimer

HODGE

Office Manager/PA £18,000-20,000

Friendly and informal team at a dynamic Strategic Consultancy seeking a highly organized individual to help run their office. Varied role including negotiating/financing with suppliers, organising report production, running textline searches, using the internet, very basic book-keeping and some PA support (managing diaries, organising travel, some typing etc). Min 45 wpm W4W skills (Apple Mac used). Call our West End Office
TEL: 0171 629 8863 • FAX: 0171 408 0861

Recruit

Powerpoint Secretaries
£17,500-20,500 + Ben - West End
Blue Chip International Management Consultancy have 5 urgent positions for committed career secretaries. Must have powerpoint to advanced level, 45+ wpm, general secretarial skills. Fast paced environment with a lot of client contact.
For immediate interviews call Lyne today on 0171 499 8112.

Have you made the wrong decision in choosing your first job?

COLLEGE LEAVER/2nd JOBS
An excellent opportunity for someone bright and keen to become involved in the marketing of these world famous products. You will be working in a fast paced, exciting and enjoyable environment. Combining your own skills with total involvement & opportunity to learn - 45 wpm. Ring to hear more about this or if it is not quite right, for other good jobs.
Mary Hill & Co
0171 730 9758

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£20,000 p.a.
This young newly new Company is looking for a Secretary to work for a well known Entrepreneur. Apart from the back-up, you will become involved in the day to day running of this successful business with the chance to diversify into new areas. Age under 35, must be Computer Literate/MS Word.
Mary Hill & Co
0171 730 9758

Good Hours Good Money!

£22K
In the heart of the West End live a friendly firm of 14. One very talented, but disgruntled Director needs a super PA to organize his projects, prioritise his day and deal with his clients. Lots to do between 9-5 60wpm W4W essential.
JOYCE GUINNESS
0171 589 8802
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

WORLD YOU LIKE THE

COLLEGE LEAVER/2nd JOBS
In London's exciting and active financial sector, a leading company is looking for a 2nd job. Salary £10K. Salary £10K/17 727 728
(No Agencies Please)

Up to £10.00 per Hour TEMPORARY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHRISTMAS!

- Due to unusually busy demand approaching Christmas, we currently have many assignments outstanding with City and West End companies
- Long and short term, maternity and temp to perm opportunities
- If you have 55 wpm with good knowledge, W4W, Excel and Powerpoint please call Julie Green for an immediate appointment.
Tel: 0171 629 2727 / Fax: 0171 630 6318

TAL(SMAN) New Image
secretarial ltd
Reno House, 310-312 Regent Street, London, W1A 2AB

PREPARE FOR A NEW CHALLENGE IN THE NEW YEAR

Now is the ideal time to contact us if you are wishing to change direction in the New Year.
• A Truly Involved PA, WC2 £28,000
• PA to MD Trading, EC3 £22,000
• Quality PA, W1 £21,000
• Recruitment Secretary £18,000
• Administrator, 2nd Jobber, WC2 £15,000
Please call Helena Van on 0171 828 2727 / Fax: 0171 630 6318.

TAL(SMAN) New Image
secretarial ltd
Reno House, 310-312 Regent Street, London, W1A 2AB

OFFICE MANAGER CHISWICK

£20K p.a. 1995
Office Administrator with marketing needed for this up-market Management Consultancy. Able to deal with clients at Board level all aspects of office management incl. presentations on powerpoint, Excel, Lotus notes. Mature and able to work independently. Fax cv to:
Pam Greenwood Personnel
0181 742 0968

FOXTONS

TRAINEE PROPERTY NEGOTIATOR
Due to further expansion plans, Foxtons require an energetic, high calibre individual to train as a property negotiator. Ideally aged 21-25 with energy, enthusiasm, a natural ability to sell and a desire to become one of Central London's most successful negotiators. Initial salary £12K during training + car. Must live in Central London.
Tel: 0171 973 2848

PUT YOUR CAREER UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Personal Career Advice for Executive Secretaries



Senior Secretary

EC2 To £22,000 + overtime
A highly professional candidate is sought to work within the Mergers and Acquisitions department of this bank. Main duties include typing proposals and presentations, telephone coverage and maintenance of projects and company files. The successful individual requires a good knowledge of MS Office and LotusNotes, excellent communication skills and a flexibility towards work hours.
0171 638 1666
87 Moorgate, London EC2M 6SA
PA To Managing Director

Chiswick £20,000
A high level of confidentiality is required for this position working for the Group MD of this construction company. Duties will include organising and attending boardroom meetings and taking minutes on shorthand or speedwriting is essential. The post will involve organising the diary and travel for the MD and dealing with correspondence. A highly organised individual with W4W and Excel experience essential.
0181 994 0106
402 Chiswick High Road, London W4 5TF
For more information on these and other high profile positions for Senior Secretaries and PAs, call now.
REED
Open from 9.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday
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Dream Job!

To £30,000 + Bens
This highly successful Financial Organisation urgently requires a PA to look after their MD. The role will incorporate extensive client contact, diary maintenance and general administration. Thus leading on to a more responsible, involved position in time. The ideal candidate will have financial experience and good MS Office experience.
Please contact Melinda Marks.
JONATHAN MARK & CO LTD
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS
No. 1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 625 5258

CENTRE POINT GROUP

BANKING AND SECRETARIAL RECRUITMENT SPECIALISTS

Careering Ahead

Graduate Level PA City £18,000 + Bens

We have a unique and exciting career opportunity for a proactive and enthusiastic individual to join a top insurance company based in prestigious offices in the city. This is more than a PA role, 50% of your time will be learning about insurance and becoming involved in the business. The ideal candidate will be recently educated to degree or equivalent level with good secretarial skills including Microsoft Office. Shorthand would be a distinct advantage although not necessary.

Avril Carr or Hilary Oudman
on 0171 585 5885 Fax: 0171 585 8010
16 St Helen's Place, London EC3A 6DF.

Secretarial opportunities within leading City PR consultancy

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A positive/strong personality as well as excellent secretarial skills (City experience essential), to include diary management, good interpersonal skills and full working knowledge of Microsoft Office and flexibility regarding overtime is required.
Age: 26-35. Starting salary: £20-£24k + benefits

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"Second jobber" secretary required for this position to work within a team of four, with a senior secretary. City experience recommended. Must be a team player, keen to learn, as well as flexibility on overtime. Age: 20+. Salary: up to £16k + benefits
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£18,000 circa

Versatile and efficient secretary required for small but busy European advertising sales office of large Japanese publishing company. Duties will include secretarial assistance to European Sales Manager, general office duties, copy and audio typing, preparation and despatch of promotional materials, customer liaison, reception, telephone and data inputting.

The successful candidate will be highly organized, with good communication skills, a pleasant telephone manner, proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite (esp. Word, Excel and Access), with a typing speed of min 60 wpm, London/EC4.

Please send CV by 17 December to:
Gabrielle Koonin
Office Manager
Nikkei Business Publications Europe Ltd
International Press Centre
76 Shoe Lane
London EC4A 4JB
Fax: 0171 583 6837
E-Mail: gabryo@globalnet.co.uk
Strictly no agencies

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Graduate of 21+ to develop this challenging administrative role in a high profile City Company. If you have a good career progression to date and want the sort of job you can really get your teeth into, this could be your chance to shine.
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sélect

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DSB is a small but busy Media Consultancy offering a range of services to all areas of the advertising, media & marketing industry.

Operating across three core areas, Training, Evaluation and Research, we need a bright, organised person to undertake secretarial and administration duties, most specifically within our training function, as well as performing some PA duties for the MD. You must be able to type (copy & paste) 40 wpm and be proficient with Microsoft Word and Powerpoint. An understanding of Access and Excel would be a distinct advantage. Suit a first or second jobber between the ages of 18-22. Salary between £12k-£14k dependent on ability and experience.

CVs with covering letter to: Julie Claydon,
DSB, Vigilant House, 120 Wilton Road,
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Apply in writing with CV to: Scott Newstead, Ritz Investment Management Limited, 92 Upper Grosvenor Street, London W1X 8PA.

PA to The Executive Director

of a prestigious Charity building world celebrity reputation £20,000 per annum, or more, commensurate with experience.
Previous experience is essential.
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TIME SAVERS

YOU probably already know how to use Find and Replace to locate and change words in Microsoft Word, and you may have discovered that you can use it to find and replace styles. But you can also use it to change other document features.

Just load a document, press Control-H or choose Edit/Replace, then click on the More button, and a list of extra features will pop up. You can find and replace fonts, paragraphs, languages, frames, tabs, styles and highlights.

You could highlight a sentence that needs checking, to remind yourself not to publish or print it without doing so. Then you could use Find and Replace to find highlighted text, remove the highlighting and make any necessary changes.

Here is a seasonal tip. If you want to know how many shopping days there are until Christmas, run Excel and type =25/12/97-03/12/97 you should get 23 as the answer. Don't forget the quotation marks, or the equals sign. You can use it to calculate the time to go to any date.

CHRIS WARD

For those who are unhappy with their jobs, this is the season to start looking around, says Susan MacDonald

Moving experience for secretaries

A good secretary is hard to find — and come the new year will become even harder. Why? Because many secretaries get that new year, new job feeling.

Traditionally this is the time when they collect their bonuses and wave goodbye to their bosses. The resulting vacancies means it is also a good time for secretaries thinking of making a move to put out feelers.

Joslin Rowe, the City recruitment consultants, decided to court the type of secretaries they need on their books by holding an open evening last week in their City offices, with drinks and snacks and a presentation from an image consultant.

The idea was that secretaries could come along after office hours to chat about their jobs as well as finding out what was on offer. For some it was a chance to express in confidence their dissatisfaction with the job they were doing to people who might be in a position to find them a better one. Others were already on the consultancy's books and this was a chance to meet the people they dealt with in a relaxed atmosphere.

Those who were unhappy in their jobs were understandably unwilling to give their names. One woman was desperate to change from one job to another but wanted to stay in the City. Her skills, she said, were going to put while she spent her days running trivial errands for her

grumpy boss. "It is important to be in the right job because so much of our life is spent in the office. I was hooked on the prestige of a top job but after this experience I realise that it's more important to be working in the right atmosphere with a positive bunch of people," she said.

Another woman worked for a company which was relocating and she did not want to move with them. She was looking for a job in London's Docklands, which is becoming increasingly popular with finance houses, because she loved the atmosphere there.

Two others wanted to exchange their City jobs for one in London's West End. They hated what they called the City's hostile banking environment. "We want something a bit more creative, with colleagues who actually say good morning to you," said one.

Karen Burge, Melissa McRae, Kylie Smith and Sara Knight, all high-flying temps, exchanged information on their jobs. All were happy in what they were doing but wanted to meet Joslin Rowe's staff. Their jobs were typical of those available in City finance sector. Working for a bank, a temp can earn between £9.50 and £10 an hour (though they get no benefits).

Ms Burge, 24, had been working for RGB underwriters for just one



High-flying temps: from left, Karen Burge, Melissa McRae, Kylie Smith and Sara Knight

week and was not sure how long the job would last. Ms McRae, 27, arrived from New Zealand in April and is an administrative assistant with the Royal Bank of Canada, in the electronic banking and cash management, Europe, department. Ms Smith, 22, works in the auction department of Sedgwick Oakwood, Lloyds underwriting agents. Ms Knight, 35, is filling in for someone on maternity leave in names administration in the same firm.

With the confidence that Australians often seem born with, Ms Smith made it seem that getting a top job was a piece of cake. "I arrived in England in April, walked in to Joslin Rowe in the summer and landed my job within two weeks," she said.

Sharon Keane was introduced as the consultancy's "star pupil". She had recently taken the plunge and resigned from her job in a large US finance house in the City after "five years of misery". "Resigning has changed my life. Before, I was always negative and depressed — ask my husband. Now I feel on top of the world."

Ms Keane, 29, is doing temporary work now and will only go permanent again if the job of her dreams comes along. "I have been working at J P Morgan for the past ten days. Next week it will be a new office and

new everything. If you are a professional secretary who can walk in and pick up the threads with no difficulty you are really appreciated," she said.

Why is she a star? Perhaps because she is assertive. She listed her good points as being cheerful, honest, relaxed, open to suggestions, having excellent skills and a vast experience in the City.

Wendy Clark of CMB Image Consultants offered advice on office dress, hairstyles and make-up. "Your choice of clothes should reflect the image of your company," she said. "Keep accessories to a minimum, don't go for an unprofessional hairstyle. Research shows that women who don't wear make-up are not noticed as much as those who do — but use it sparingly."

These professional secretaries had little to learn about image, although one sportingly volunteered to be analysed by Ms Clark. "Because you are petite you should shorten your skirt slightly and a bright red shirt would look better with that jacket, considering your colouring."

It was like water off a duck's back. "I wear blue most of the time," she said, as the woman alongside her nodded in agreement. "Would your friend like some advice, too?" Ms Clark asked. "She's not a friend, she's my boss," came the answer. And that sums up the radical changes in office life.

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Crème de la Crème

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£7.50-£8.50 per hour + great PERM prospects

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The beautiful luxury goods made by this highly exciting and rapidly growing company are probably the hottest and most sought after items in the fashion world! They now need a fantastic PA with good shorthand - 50wpm plus to work for their stylishly charming, young MD. The atmosphere is chic, fun and entrepreneurial as you must thrive on using your own creative ideas and be an absolute self-starter. If you think you can handle the fashion press, plus busy travel schedules, organise a lunch party and have with some of the most influential individuals in the fashion business all in a day's work then this role is for you! You don't want any experience in this field, simply the gift of amazing communication skills, a good brain and — **most of all** — confidence, because that's what you'll find lots of here!

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£23,000 + Bonus + Benefits

Polished, confident and a strong character are the qualities that this fabulous West End Company are looking for. You'll be working as a PA in a busy environment in lovely offices with the nicest bunch of people that you could hope to meet. Great interpersonal skills are a must, because you'll be arranging Client and Executive meetings as well as travel itineraries etc. This position requires good sec. skills, 60wpm typing (audio & copy, no shift nec.), and you should have a sound knowledge of Microsoft Word. Experience in Finance or Exec. Search would also be useful! If you are 26-40 yrs of age and think you fit the bill, don't waste any more time - call us now!

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up to £25,000 + great prospects

If you are aged between 24 and 32 you could be about to land the cracker of all jobs. In this fab position you'll be working as a PA to the MD alongside a group of people all of a similar age that thrive in this lively and social atmosphere. Read on because it gets better - the company is based in South Kensington, and you are eligible to apply for this position even if you are a second jobber! You will need 2 years sec. experience because 80wpm shift and 50wpm typing are a must so that you can keep up with your boss's busy schedule. If you want to make those Christmas lights shine, call us now!

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PA to Executive Director
No sh/h nec! up to £24,000 + priv health

This company, based 1 minute from Bond St, are looking for a bright, keen PA to work for a new Director. The job's totally new and he wants you to be very actively involved in his projects - research, co-ordinate and provide real right hand secretarial support. Perhaps you're working for a team and now you'd like the chance to be more of an Executive Secretary? It's a small company so you must enjoy working as part of a close-knit team (age 25+). Numeracy is an advantage, as well as good sec. skills (60+ wpm typing). Begin at the beginning & start afresh and bring your experience and talents to this organisation!

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St James's, SW1
'Just a really nice job!'
£19,000 + bonus, pens

Beautiful new offices, a great one-to-one PA role and involved hours! This company, who have offices all over the world and work with high net worth individuals & wealthy organisations, are looking for someone to join them in this very secretarial role. You must have 50wpm typing, and some solid work experience (about 1-2 yrs behind you). It's a young, social company so if you're looking for a lovely secretarial job with professional, team spirited people who are looking forward to making their newest member of staff very welcome, call us now.

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Operations Coordinator
to £18,000 + car parking + package

'Happy' is the one word that sums up this company. There's a real buzz when you walk through the door and everyone is so nice! They're looking for someone aged 21+ to work as the Operations Coordinator in Training. This role is more admin based than secretarial (30wpm typing needed), so you'll need 1 yrs office experience. This is the perfect job for someone who has initiative, good communication skills and will thrive working with a team of young and lively people. If you are the right person, then the prospects within this company are endless. Graduates welcome.

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Trendy Camden
£18,000

This smart and hyper snazzy company needs a Secretary to help a team of three partners. They are a great bunch of architects who are looking for someone who is friendly, extrovert and doesn't mind handling a variety of different duties; from general typing, answering telephones to keeping diaries. A well organised mind is therefore a necessity. You will need 50 wpm typing and be able to use Word. If this position grabs your attention, get on that phone and call us now!

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Lots of Fun In W1
Up to £18,000 + Med

A small team within a reputable company are looking for a sec who can organise them and knock their admin into shape. Its perfect for someone who's not interested in a purely secretarial role and wants to be more involved with the "goings on" in the team. A sense of humour is a must and someone who is presentable and has initiative is going to really enjoy this great position. You'll need Windows experience and 50 wpm typing. If you're interested call us now - you won't be disappointed!

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JUST TWO MONTHS OR MORE EXPERIENCE NEEDED... Junior Reception (PR)
£13-15,000 + Bonus + Med

This fantastic young company, situated in trendy new offices in Victoria are looking for a bright spark, aged between 19-24, to run their Reception. You'll be involved in various fun admin duties & doing a little back-up typing when necessary (35 wpm). If you are eager, polished and have an efficient and friendly telephone manner call us now for this great opportunity!

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If you are interested in this position please send your CV to: Teresa King, International Personnel Management, Clifford Chance, London EC1A 4JJ. Tel: 0171 600 1000 Fax: 0171 600 1001 e-mail: teresa.king@cliffordchance.com

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£17,000
GORDON-YATES

The company: Britain's leading career consultancy based in the heart of London's West End.

The role: Fully involving and varied recruitment co-ordinator role incorporating the organisation of seminars and events, marketing, research, presentations and some office management.

The essentials: A self starter with confidence, initiative, and enthusiasm together with good sec. skills (40+ wpm typing), advanced Excel (essential), experience within a customer services/account handling background a must.

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Bilingual PA
£22,000-£25,000
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International West End architectural practice are seeking a bilingual PA. Although you will be working in an informal environment, the demands are high you will have pots of energy and an even temper!

Duties include:

- Translation from German into English and vice versa
- Secretarial backup on all German projects
- Organising meetings
- Directors lecture programme and travel arrangements
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- Producing presentation material on QuarkExpress

This interesting and varied position would suit a pro-active self starter with an interest in architecture. If this position is of interest then please call: A&P HWY 2 days/week. Ref: MJHA, 12 Hyde Street, London W1H 5AQ. 0171 600 1000.

EDEN BROWN RECRUITMENT
2 Pough Vard, London EC2A 3LP

When cause against valuer arises Sentencing in the military context

Nykredit Mortgage Bank plc v Edward Erdman Group Ltd (No 2)

Before Lord Goff of Chieveley, Lord Jauncey of Tullichettle, Lord Slynn of Hadley, Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead and Lord Hoffmann (Speeches November 27)

A lender's cause of action on a claim against a valuer for damages in respect of a negligent valuation arose when a relevant and measurable loss was first recorded.

Order 42, rule 3 of the Rules of the Supreme Court gave a court no power to backdate an order for costs to the date on which judgment had been given in a lower court.

The House of Lords had inherent jurisdiction to award interest on damages and costs paid by the defendants to the plaintiffs pursuant to orders of the trial judge and the Court of Appeal and ordered by the House of Lords on appeal to be repaid.

The House of Lords gave judgment following the resumed hearing on the question of interest, adjourned sine die in its judgment on appeal from *Banque Bruxelles Lambert SA v Eagle Star Insurance Co Ltd* [The Times June 24, 1996] [1997] 1 All ER 191.

Mr Simon Bery, QC and Mr Jonathan Ferris for the defendants, Edward Erdman Group Ltd; Mr Michael Briggs, QC and Mr David Blayney for the plaintiffs, Nykredit Mortgage Bank plc.

LORD NICHOLLS said that in *Banque Bruxelles* the House had given judgment in the present and two other appeals concerning the measure of damages payable to lenders by valuers who had negligently overvalued property provided as security for loans.

In the present appeal the House had decided, for the reasons given by Lord Hoffmann, that the measure was limited to the amount of the overvaluation. That had been £1.4 million.

Section 35A(3) of the Supreme Court Act 1981, inserted by section 15(1) of and Schedule 1, Part 1 to the Administration of Justice Act 1982, empowered the court to award simple interest on the damages: "... for all or any part of the period between the date when the cause of action arose and ... the date of the judgment."

The plaintiffs claimed that their cause of action had arisen in March 1990, at the date of the loan transaction, when they had suffered an immediate loss. The defendants contended that it had not arisen until the property had been sold in February 1993, when the plaintiffs had been visited with the consequence of the valuation being wrong.

The cause of action in cases in tort arose when the plaintiff first sustained damage. Thus the question was what was meant by "damage". In the context of claims for loss that was purely financial or economic.

In *Forster v Oued & Co* [1982] 1 WLR 86, 94 Lord Justice Stephenson had accepted the submission of Mr Stuart-Smith, QC: "What is meant by actual damage? £3 million. Of that loss the amount attributable to the defendant's incorrect valuation had been £1.4 million. The basic comparison gave rise to issues of fact. The moment at which it first revealed a loss would depend on the facts of each case. Such difficulties as there might be were evidential and practical, not difficulties in principle.

The first step was to identify the relevant measure of loss.

Typically, in the case of a negligent valuation of an intended loan security, the basic comparison called for was between the amount lent by the plaintiff, which he would still have had in the absence of the loan transaction, plus interest at a proper rate, and the value of the rights acquired, namely the borrower's covenant and the true value of the overvalued property.

However, a value was not liable for all the consequences that flowed from the lender entering into the transaction. He was liable only for the consequences attributable to the deficiency in the valuation.

If the basic comparison threw up a loss, it was necessary to inquire further and see what part of the loss was the consequence of the deficiency in the valuation.

Typically, the answer to that further inquiry would correspond with the amount of the loss as shown by the basic comparison, for the lender would not have entered into the transaction had he been properly advised, but he was limited to the extent of the overvaluation.

That had been the measure applied in the present case. The plaintiffs had suffered a loss, including unpaid interest, of over £3 million. Of that loss the amount attributable to the defendant's incorrect valuation had been £1.4 million.

The basic comparison gave rise to issues of fact. The moment at which it first revealed a loss would depend on the facts of each case. Such difficulties as there might be were evidential and practical, not difficulties in principle.

In the present case the borrower's covenant had been worthless. The borrower had defaulted at once, and the amount lent, £2.45 million, had at all times exceeded the true value of the property, £2.1 million.

Thus the cause of action had arisen at the time of the transaction or thereabouts. By December 1990 the plaintiffs had sustained their full allowable loss of £1.4 million. Simple interest should be awarded on that amount from December 12, 1990 until judgment.

In its substantive judgment, the House had ordered the plaintiffs to pay, inter alia, the costs incurred by the defendants in the Court of Appeal on the issue of quantum.

The defendants sought interest in respect of those costs from the date on which judgment had been given in the Court of Appeal. They sought an order similar to the backdated order that the Court of Appeal had approved in *Kawati Airways Corporation v Iraqi Airways Co (No 2)* [1994] 1 WLR 985.

In that case the Court of Appeal, which had found its jurisdiction in Order 42, rule 3 of the Rules of the Supreme Court, had been limited to error.

Statute apart, courts had no power to award interest on costs, and, however desirable it might be for the court to have power to order the payment of interest on costs from a date earlier than the date on which the court gave judgment, such a power could not be exercised out of Order 42, rule 3.

Regina v Love

Before Lord Justice Simon Brown, Mr Justice Roush and Mr Justice Auld (Judgment November 11)

In considering appeals against sentence under section 17 of the Armed Forces Act 1996, which amended section 8 of the Courts-Martial Appeal Act 1968, the Courts-Martial Appeal Court was exercising a somewhat hybrid jurisdiction.

It was clear the Parliament intended that any injustice in a court-martial sentence should be corrected but the court also had to assess the seriousness of the offending in the context of service life and the need to maintain the discipline and efficiency of the Armed Forces.

The Courts-Martial Appeal Court so held in allowing an appeal by Sgt Colin Gilbert Love, Royal Military Police, against a sentence imposed on June 6, 1997, at a District Court-Martial held at Shoreham (Assistant Judge Advocate-General Pearson) on his plea of guilty to two charges of sending indecent or obscene material through the post, contrary to section 11(2) of the Post Office Act 1952. He had been dismissed from his Majesty's Service and reduced to the ranks. The court substituted fines of £100 on each count.

Mr Gordon Bebb for the appellant.

LORD JUSTICE SIMON

BROWN, giving the judgment of the court, said there were certain observations to be made about this new right of appeal and what should be the court's approach to it.

The first point to make about appeals from court-martial sentences was that the sentences which a court-martial could impose were, in many instances, strikingly different from those available to crown courts.

Listed in order of gravity, they were as follows:

1 Imprisonment in a civilian prison.

2 Dismissal with disgrace from her Majesty's Service.

3 Dismissal from her Majesty's Service.

4 Detention in a corrective training centre for a period not exceeding two years.

5 Reduction in rank.

6 Fine.

7 Severe reprimand or reprimand.

8 Such minor punishments as might flow from time to time authorised by the Defence Council.

Second, court-martial sentences were concerned at one and the same time to achieve two things: first, to punish service personnel for the criminality of their conduct, and second to deal with them on a disciplinary basis. That was unique.

Members of other professions and occupations who transgressed the law of the land were dealt with quite separately (a) by civilian

criminal courts and then, if appropriate, (b) by their professional disciplinary bodies.

In the present class of appeal it seemed to their Lordships that the court while free, and clearly intended by Parliament, to correct any injustice which was to be perceived in a court-martial sentence, it was nevertheless necessary to be mindful that those imposing and confirming such a sentence were, generally speaking, better placed than their Lordships to assess the seriousness of offending in the context of service life and to decide upon what particular penalty was required to maintain the discipline and efficiency of the Armed Forces.

In certain cases, for the maintenance of discipline, a court-martial might impose a heavier sentence on a service member than would be appropriate for their civilian counterparts.

With all those considerations in mind, the sentence imposed here was quite out of proportion to the criminality of the conduct in question which amounted to sending through the post two letters relating to homosexual and heterosexual acts involving children and dogs.

The court-martial acknowledged that the material was pure fantasy and not really but took the view that a very high standard was required from a military policeman so that continued service would be impossible.

Dismissal was one of the most severe sentences in the range available and also involved a reduction to the ranks and a huge pension loss. There was nothing about this case which, because the appellant was a serving soldier, made it or that account the more serious by threatening the trust or discipline within the appellant's unit. The appropriate sentence would have been a fine.

Through the investigation of those offences it had come to light that the appellant was a latent homosexual. As was well known, the policy of the Ministry of Defence at present was that it would not permit homosexuals to serve within the Armed Forces and once such orientation was established administrative discharge followed.

It seemed unrealistic not to recognise that, despite this judgment, the appellant's days in the Army were numbered. That administrative discharge too, their Lordships noted, involved the selfsame loss of pension rights as dismissal from the service.

Finally, his Lordship added that this appellant's petition to the Defence Council for review was refused but the court was provided neither with the petition nor with the reasons for the refusal to it. On any future such appeal the court should be provided with the appellant's petition to the Defence Council and its reasons for refusal.

Solicitors: Warner, Goodman & Sear, Portsmouth.

Move to restore jurisdiction lost by appeal tribunal

Practice Statement (Employment Appeal Tribunal: Jurisdiction)

Following the decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal in *Pendragon plc v Jackson* [The Times November 12] that that tribunal did not have jurisdiction to hear appeals from decisions where the industrial tribunals' jurisdiction derived from the Industrial Tribunals Act 1996, namely complaints of damages for breach of contract, Mr Justice Morison, President of EAT, explained on November 24 the steps being taken to cope with the problem which the decision had caused in the context of proposals to rectify the legislation.

MR JUSTICE MORISON said that prior to the hearing of the *Pendragon* appeal there had been inserted into the Employment Rights (Dispute Resolution) Bill, a clause giving back to the EAT the jurisdiction it previously had and making the changes retrospective. Statutory jurisdiction was likely to be restored in April 1998.

Until corrective legislation had been enacted no breach of contract appeals would be listed for hearing.

It did not follow that in every case where a breach of contract had been alleged that the EAT did not have jurisdiction. Jurisdiction to hear appeals against decisions relating to constructive dismissal remained intact, as it did in relation to decisions dealing with unlawful deduction from wages. Further, an appeal would lie against a decision which dealt with a breach of

contract claim where the appeal did not concern that issue.

Where an appeal related to more than one head of complaint, for example, unfair dismissal coupled with a claim for damages for wrongful dismissal, the appeal would have to be postponed.

During the *Pendragon* case counsel had raised the possibility of an appeal to the EAT as an interim measure. It was not necessary to say whether such an appeal could be made but it was expected that any such appeals would take more than a year to come on for hearing.

It was hoped that the jurisdiction problem would have been put right well before any appeal could be heard by any other route.

Queries by parties could be raised with the EAT listing office.

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Queries by parties could be raised with the EAT listing office.

Kataria v Safeland plc

Before Lord Justice Schiemann and Lord Justice Brooke (Judgment November 4)

A landlord who was not personally owed any arrears of his tenant's rent but who had assigned the right of recovery to his predecessor in title could nevertheless exercise a power of re-entry to re-enter the premises and forfeit the lease.

The Court of Appeal so held allowing an appeal by the landlord, Safeland plc, from Judge Cotnam's judgment in Westminster County Court on September 16, 1996 in which he had held that the landlord's purported forfeiture of Mr Vinod Kataria's lease of shop premises at 39 Kingsway, London, had been unlawful.

The tenant held the premises, a modest walk-in stock, under a lease which contained a provision for re-entry in the event of the rent falling into arrears.

In October 1995 the present landlord had agreed to purchase the freehold of the premises, the tenant at that time owing arrears of some £10,000 but having made arrangements to clear them.

Under the terms of the sale agreement the landlord had as-

signed the right to recover the arrears to his predecessor in title. The agreement was completed on November 14, 1995 and on November 16 the landlord re-entered the premises thereby forfeiting the lease on the ground on non-payment of rent.

Mr Jonathan Ferris for the landlord; Mr Martyn Barnden for the tenant.

LORD JUSTICE BROOKE said that the question, never previously decided, was whether a landlord who was not personally owed any arrears of rent because he had assigned the right to recover the arrears to his predecessor, could nevertheless exercise a peaceable power of re-entry and forfeit the lease.

The judge had taken the view that on the proper construction of the lease the right to re-enter was owed to the particular landlord who sought to enforce the right of re-entry.

But Mr Ferris, relying on basic principles of landlord and tenant law, said that there was no such restriction in the wording of the re-entry clause and no reason why such qualification should be implied. The judge, he said, had

failed to distinguish between the personal remedy to sue the tenant for the arrears, which had been assigned to the landlord's predecessor, with the proprietary remedy of forfeiture for breach of covenant which remained vested in the landlord.

Those submissions were well founded. Given that the proprietary remedy of re-entry had unquestionably been assigned to the landlord and that the conditions on which he was entitled to re-enter were fulfilled, he was entitled as a matter of law to re-enter.

There was no merit in law, although one had great sympathy with Mr Barnden's submission, that at the time that the landlord exercised his right of re-entry he himself had to be owed rent. If it was owing under the lease, albeit to a previous landlord to whom the incoming landlord had assigned a personal right to recover it, the new landlord was entitled to exercise his contractual right.

The judge had described the landlord's behaviour as monstrous. So far as residential tenants were concerned, Parliament had passed legislation 40 years

ago requiring a landlord to obtain a court order before dispossessing a tenant. No such inhibition existed in relation to landlords of business tenants.

Twelve years ago the Law Commission had recommended the introduction of a statutory scheme whereby business landlords would be required to obtain a court order before proceeding to re-enter; see *Law Commission Report No 142 on Forfeiture of Tenancies* (1985). Four years ago the commission had published a draft bill to give effect to that recommendation: *Law Commission Report No 221: Termination of Tenancies Bill* (1989).

Nothing had been done and nothing would be done to implement those recommendations unless fast-track procedures were available to help landlords to obtain a possession order speedily in clear and obvious cases. In the meantime landlords were entitled to go on behaving as the landlord had done in 1997, and if they considered it proper to do so.

Lord Justice Schiemann agreed. Solicitors: Philippsohn Crawford Berwald; Walter Wilson Richmond, Harrow.

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RACING: DUAL KING GEORGE VI CHASE WINNER HEADS BETTING ON THIS SEASON'S RENEWAL

One Man seeks control of grey area

BY CHRIS MCGRATH

FOR many disciples of National Hunt racing, the grey eminence of Desert Orchid will forever haunt Kempton on Boxing Day. This year, however, the equine ghost of Christmas past might just begin to fade. One Man and Sunny Bay have invited comparison to Desert Orchid, not so much for the colour of their coats as for their vibrant brilliance. Their clash contributes to a King George VI Chase of compelling interest — and yesterday bookmakers quickened the pulse further by opening a book on the race.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: None Stirred (3.40 Fontwell Park)

None Stirred finished a close second to the useful Spendat at Cheltenham recently. A drop in class and soft ground should see this lightly raced gelding go one better at Fontwell Park.

Next best: Ragamuff (3.10 Fontwell Park)

complete a treble in the race, chalking him up at 7-4. Sunny Bay, dramatic winner of the Hennessy Gold Cup last weekend, is 7-2, followed on 4-1 by the emerging star, Simply Dashing. Mr Mulligan, the Gold Cup winner, is only fourth favourite at 9-2, while it is 12-1 against Barton Bank — Mr Mulligan's victim at Cheltenham and second to Sunny Bay and One Man since.

Rough Quest, the 1996 Martell Grand National winner, is quoted at 16-1, along with Trying Again. See More Business, set to confront Rough Quest on his return from injury in the Coral Rehearsal Chase at Cheltenham

on Saturday, is 25-1, and likewise the American challenger, Lonesome Glory. Another overseas raider, Djedjah, is 33-1.

David Gilbert, senior odds compiler at Coral, said: "One Man has shown himself so well suited by this race that only very soft ground would seem likely to hand Sunny Bay the advantage, though I would respect Simply Dashing."

While it is self-evident that One Man's particular brand of flair is ideally attuned to the sharp three miles at Kempton, matters are complicated by the presence of some gritty stayers who also like to force the pace. Sunny Bay himself tends to be ridden aggressively, along with Mr Mulligan and Barton Bank — who, incidentally, not only holds a lot of the form together, but seems as good as ever. He would have won this race in 1994, as well as the previous year, but for that heartbreaking final-fence fall.

As a rule, Kempton is made for the front-runner, but this King George could be run at a pace cruel enough to favour those horses that are held up. After all, One Man's stride has always shortened dramatically on those occasions when he has eventually been forced off the bridle. With Rough Quest yet to confirm his wellbeing, Simply Dashing is the obvious one to benefit from a patient ride, but Trying Again could certainly go better than his strict form merits.

He seemed not to last home after cruising for a long way in the Hennessy, so the return to a shorter trip on a sharper track seems sure to suit. Moreover, he is better going right-handed, and was entitled to need that outing, his first in a year. Whatever the

outcome, this looks a race to revive the most faded of enthusiasts, and make converts of the uninitiated.

The latter may have allowed last week's rather petty *Cutting Edge* documentary to gore the image of British racing. But the sport could hardly ask for a more soothing gloss than has been provided by a different set of cameras — which is just as well, as *Thoroughbreds* is set for a global audience of 750 million.

This new film will afford overseas and in-flight viewers a beguiling half-hour in the

The BBC is to lose coverage of the Lingfield Derby Trial meeting to Channel 4 next year. Its association has been ended because it was reducing its Lingfield coverage to just one fixture. Channel 4 will televise four meetings from the Surrey track in 1998, including all-weather racing on January 3 and March 21.

company of some of racing's rather less petrifid characters, with Harry Herbert and Sir Mark Prescott proving predictably effective evangelists.

Thoroughbreds was made possible by £100,000 of funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, augmented by £60,000 from various sponsors within the sport. One of a series of programmes devoted to the promotion of British industry around the world, it certainly offers a picturesque and infectious celebration of racing. For an even stronger flavour, however, make sure you watch the King George VI Chase.



One Man aims for a third win in the King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day

Newcastle lost as frost starts to bite

NEWCASTLE became the fifth meeting of the National Hunt season to be lost to weather when yesterday's programme was called off after a 9am inspection. The temperature had fallen to -3C overnight and snow had fallen on the course, hampering the prospects of a show.

"The frost is in the ground with snow on top," David McAllister, the clerk of the course, said. "We covered the landings and take-offs but the footings — after we raced on Saturday — are solid. You can't cover the whole course."

Newton Aboot, the other jumps meeting scheduled for yesterday, had been called off on Monday because of water-logging, leaving Lingfield's all-weather fixture as the only racing in Britain.

Today's fixture at Catterick could also be under threat from frost. A spokeswoman for the track said yesterday: "We had a frost last night and the forecast is for it to stay cold today with the chance of wintry showers and sunny spells. The temperature tonight is to get down to -2 to -4C, which is not as cold as last night."

It was a similar story at Southwell, where it had been as low as -5C on Monday night. Dave Williams, the head groundsman, said: "We don't have any problems at the moment. There is frost forecast tonight but we are hopeful that racing will go ahead."

Prospects for today seem brightest at Fontwell. "We are all right, although we had 16mm of rain and sleet overnight changing the going to soft," Paul Deacon, the assistant clerk of the course, said.

SQUASH Jansher in struggle to subdue Meads

FROM COLIN MCQUILLAN IN BOMBAY

THE extraordinary conditions in which the Mahindra International Challenge is played have already taken their toll on seeded players and Jansher Khan, the world No 1 and top seed, who is competing in India for the first time, is counting himself fortunate not to be among the fallen.

Jansher has always refused to play in Bombay because he felt as a high-profile Muslim athlete from Pakistan, he was at risk in a fervently Hindu city. In the first round of this event, which is scheduled to become the World Open championship, he was significantly more at risk from Stephen Meads, of England.

Meads, a former British national champion, was forced to work his way through a tough qualifying tournament where an indoor court to reach the main rounds. However, he gave the Pakistani maestro all sorts of trouble on the transparent show-court that has been placed on the pitch of the Cricket Club of India.

Meads was unfortunate to be given seven no-let calls in the fifth game by the referee, Vaman Apte, after he had the world No 1 on the ropes. Jansher went on to win 15-8, 15-12, 16-17, 13-15, 15-8 in 86 minutes.

"It was the worst match I have ever played," Jansher said. "I have been suffering from tonsillitis and had a fever ten days ago. I'm not as physically fit as I should be. I had no chance to practise on the show-court."

The sixth seed, Ahmed Barada, of Egypt, was unhappy with the officiating when he was leading 8-4 in the fifth game against Craig Rowland, of Australia. Barada turned on a ball in the fourth round, asked for a let as Rowland crossed his line of sight in the top right corner, and was devastated by a penalty stroke decision against him from Yogendra Singh.

Barada has been much criticised for his ingrained habit of refusing to play a ball on which he can turn, but this is harsh criticism of his playing style. He relinquished the rest of the match with little resistance.

Results, page 45

FONTWELL PARK

1.10 English Invader 2.40 Doctor
1.40 Spy Knoll 3.10 Ragamuff (nap)
1.50 Emerald Statement 3.40 MILLMOUNT (nap)

GOING: SOFT TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

1.50 SELBY SELLING HURDLE (11.33, 2m 21.10yd) (11 runners)
101 ARNE 12 (4) (C) (J) (P) (S) 10-12 L. Long 78
102 GUPPY DESERT PRESIDENT 14 (5) (P) (S) 10-12 L. Long 78
103 ELAMANT 18 (6) (P) (S) 10-12 M. S. Dwyer 78
104 DEER 18 (6) (P) (S) 10-12 M. S. Dwyer 78
105 POK-8 18 (6) (P) (S) 10-12 M. S. Dwyer 78
106 POK-8 18 (6) (P) (S) 10-12 M. S. Dwyer 78
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Why Prince Harry of Highbury deserted the Royals

The gentrification of football can go no further. Last weekend, Prince Harry was snapped, a face in the crowd at the Arsenal. And, as a thrilling battle for the championship runners-up slot heated up (and Arsenal went down 1-0 to Liverpool) thanks to a goal from the princely Steve McNamara, the princeling Harry shouted the lads on from beneath his woolly Arsenal hat.

And, unless the Queen turns up to open Parliament in an Arsenal shirt bearing the motto *Dieu et mon droit* — which I believe translates as "God and My Wright" — we can surely celebrate football's ultimate social achievement. God for Harry, England and the Arsenal.

What, we must ask ourselves, does all this mean? First and obviously, if you want to watch

Premiership football, it is not essential to be of royal blood and royal income, but it certainly helps. Secondly, it is with some relief that one observes that the thoughtful and discriminating prince has chosen a comparatively obscure team to support.

I mean, thank the Lord, it is not Manchester United he went for. (Before I continue, let me add that United are indeed playing great football, a treat to watch, and their European adventuring has been stunningly assured. Will the usual half-baked, knee-jerk, purblind, no-one-likes-us-and-we-really-really-care United loyalists for once save their stamps.)

'He has rejected the chance of supporting Reading'

My godson is a Manchester United supporter and he lives in Penryn in Cornwall, which is as far from Manchester as you can get without emigrating. He is inclined to triumphalism over his father, a Spurs man who used to live off the Seven Sisters Road and cheered standing up.

My godson scorns the charms of Falmouth Town and Plymouth Argyle, just as Prince Harry rejected the chance of supporting Reading. What is local loyalty compared with glory and the regular opportunity to see the lads on telly?

Ah, glory! Surely, if you pay all that money to watch a Premiership football team in the flesh, you have

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

a right to glory. A substantial investment in pleasure, a decent sum of money whether you are a prince or a plumber — that surely

gives you a right to get a pretty decent return.

Nobody minds too much if a 10p win patent goes down the tubes. One can even relish one's bad luck, curse the jockey, thank the Lord there was nothing worse. But a hundred quid and an odds-on favourite falls at the first takes a bit of laughing off. You had a right, at least, to some kind of run for your money.

The gentrification of Premiership football has been giving supporters the feeling — indeed, an almost legitimate one — that they have a right to glory. Defeat is not to be laughed off. And it is no longer a source of misery and disappointment either. It has be-

come a matter of hard and purposeful anger.

How could they lose? With all that money. With all my money. Someone, somewhere, is betraying me. The manager must go. The chairman must go. The striker must go. Somebody must go. Somebody must suffer publicly for the mess he has made with my money.

Some have put this increasing anger down to football's gentrification. Football attracts "the wrong people" nowadays, people who buy not loyalty but glory with their match and their season ticket. But it is not the people who have changed so much as the level of their investment. Today, people go

to football more in expectation than in hope. Tell me — is there still gallows humour in Premiership football? I remember a last-throw-three-six-pointer in the old first division, and Swindon Town's opponents jeering: "Going down, going down, going down." As one man, Swindon responded: "So are we, so are we, so are we."

Fact: you can run 20 plumbing firms well and you will have 20 success stories. Another fact: you can run 20 Premiership football teams well and there will still only be one champion, and there will still be three teams relegated. And you can also have 20 barons, but only one king. That is what the feudal system meant. We cannot all be kings at the same time. No Arsenal football person knows that there is more to football than winning. Like losing, for example. Glory is for wimps.

FOOTBALL

Saunders happy to move as Forest cut their wages bill

By RICHARD HOBSON

DEAN SAUNDERS, the Wales forward, completed his move to Sheffield United yesterday after being allowed to leave Nottingham Forest on a free transfer. It says much for the extent to which Saunders fell from favour at the City Ground that Forest rejected a bid of £500,000 by Everton just three months ago, and the player could not resist a sideswipe at his former club.

He had been training with the reserves after failing to displace Pierre van Hooijdonk or Kevin Campbell in the first team and Dave Bassett, the Forest manager, had no qualms in allowing him to join a side likely to be among their rivals for promotion to the FA Cup Premiership.

Saunders, joining the ninth club of his career on an 18-

month contract, said: "I have never been so unhappy than over the last year. The harder I tried, the worse it got. I have analysed the situation and a lot of the things that have happened have not been my fault."

"I said to my wife that if you buy a Ferrari and use it for rallying and then stick it in the garage you can understand how it loses its value. Last season I played right wing and right back, and this season I have hardly played at all. I had options to go to a Premier club but after speaking to Charles Green [the Sheffield United chief executive] I felt I was signing for Real Madrid."

Saunders, 33, cost £1.5 million from Galatasaray, in Turkey, 18 months ago, but scored just three goals in 34

league games as Forest suffered relegation from the Premiership.

It is the second time in three weeks that Forest have been prepared to write off an expensive striker to trim their wages bill. Last month they terminated the contract of Andrea Silenzi, a £1.8 million arrival from Torino, with a payment of £150,000 to the player.

Martin O'Neill, the Leicester City manager, says he is losing interest in signing Trevor Sinclair because of speculation linking him with the Queens Park Rangers striker. He inquired about Sinclair when Stewart Houston was still the QPR manager, but O'Neill is adamant that no bid has been lodged.

Houston was sacked a few days after O'Neill's inquiry and informed John Hollins, his replacement on a caretaker basis, of Leicester's interest. According to O'Neill, however, there has been no contact between the clubs since.

"I do not know if Sinclair is available, what the asking price would be or whether we can afford his wages," O'Neill said. "Stewart told me to submit a bid in writing if I was interested. I never bothered, and the situation at QPR changed."

"I have made general comments about the need to sign quality players, which have been turned into specific comments about Trevor Sinclair. It has reached the point where I am beginning to consider not considering the player at all," O'Neill said that he was due to watch Sinclair against Norwich City in the Nationwide League first division tonight, but was having second thoughts.

He has £6 million available to spend after Leicester's flotation, but believes he must amend his policy of signing untried players for the club to progress from the stage where avoiding relegation is considered sufficient achievement.

Although Sinclair, 24, has spent most of his career away from the top flight, he won seven England Under-21 caps and was called into the full squad under Terry Venables. QPR rejected a bid of £4 million from Tottenham Hotspur last year.

Hollins said: "As far as I know there has not been a bid for Sinclair this season. He is happy with us, so there is no point asking how much we want for him."

George Graham yesterday became one of Britain's highest-paid managers when he signed a new long-term deal with Leeds United, believed to be worth £1 million a year. The agreement puts Graham in the same pay bracket as Alex Ferguson, at Manchester United, Kenny Dalglish, at Newcastle United, and Roy Hodgson, of Blackburn Rovers.

The move also quashes speculation of a possible move to Rangers at the end of the season as successor to Walter Smith.



Coombs will not give up the day job unless a long, lucrative contract is offered by a Football League club

Roundabout route to record

There is a fair chance that when the Final is over on May 16, when the last supporter has drifted jubilantly or dejectedly down Wembley Way, the leading goalscorer in the FA Cup will not be Dennis Bergkamp, Chris Sutton or Robbie Fowler. The honour will fall to Paul Coombs.

Coombs, 27, will not be at the Venue of Legends. He plays for Basingstoke Town in the Ryman League premier division and, this Saturday, will travel to Northampton Town, of the Nationwide League second division, for the Wycombe replay was his 150th for the club, he has since taken the total to 152 in 288 appearances — an average of 0.52 per game. Alan Shearer's career average is 0.54.

Yet the big time has probably passed him by. He flirted with Queens Park Rangers as a schoolboy and joined and left Aldershot before the club folded. When he moved on to Farnborough Town, Stoke City and Sheffield United expressed no more than passing interest. In seven seasons with Basingstoke, few scouts have tried to negotiate the town of many roundabouts.

"In football terms, I'm getting on a bit," Coombs, a corporate account manager, said. "I enjoy what I do, I make a good living working and playing semi-professionally and I have a very understanding wife and employers. It would need a really good package, including a long-term contract, to tempt me away now."

Basingstoke's success has had its drawbacks. Though they are out of the Hampshire Senior Cup, they are still in the FA Cup. FA Umbro Tro-

Russell Kempson on a non-league marksman
with his sights on a notable achievement



goals in 21 matches this season since recovering from damaged medial ligaments in his right knee: his first goal in the Wycombe replay was his 150th for the club, he has since taken the total to 152 in 288 appearances — an average of 0.52 per game. Alan Shearer's career average is 0.54.

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phy, Guardian Insurance Cup and Full Members' Cup. They have fallen behind with their league fixtures and have sunk to the depths of the Ryman premier division.

"Of our last 13 matches, 11 have been in cups," John Gray, the Basingstoke press officer, Sunday youth team manager and public address announcer, said. "Northampton will be our eighteenth cup tie of the season. It's a busy time for us, all very exciting, but once we get going again in the league, we'll be all right. A mid-table finish would be fine."

About 1,300 Basingstoke supporters will be among the 7,600 sell-out crowd at Sixfields, urging on the side to create club history. In its 101-year existence, it has never reached the third round. Sadly, Wolfe, the mongrel — an ever-present at the Camrose Ground with his owner, Mick Cole — will not be there. Canine fans are not appreciated at League grounds.

Much of Basingstoke's hopes will rest on Coombs, the 6ft striker who failed to make the professional grade but who could yet rate a mention in the record books. "Top scorer in the FA Cup?" he said. "That would be nice, wouldn't it?"

Harrison showed his marksmanship with a powerful header against Palace at Upton Park a month ago, but that goal was wiped out after the game was abandoned when the floodlights failed. The rerun should feature West Ham's Australia winger, Stan Lazaridis, who is due for his first Premiership outing since a groin injury in September.

He insisted that he will only play if he is 100 per cent fit. By his own admission, he did not do himself justice when he attempted an early comeback from another ankle injury collected on England duty against Poland. "I tried to rush back last season and it caused me longer-term problems," he said. "It did nobody — myself or the team — any favours."

Juventus will be without at least four first-team regulars for their European Cup Champions' League encounter with Manchester United in Turin next week. The Italian champions had already lost two strikers for the tie in group B — Alessandro Del Piero, through suspension, and Nicola Amoruso, with a leg fracture sustained at the weekend — but medical tests have now ruled out Didier Deschamps, the France midfielder, who badly sprained a right thigh muscle during the defeat last week to Feyenoord, and Gianluca Pessotto, the defender, who suffered a similar injury in the Serie A match against AC Milan on Sunday.

Juventus must beat United on December 10 if they are to have any chance of qualifying for one of two slots available in the quarter-finals for the best runners-up of the six groups. Borussia Dortmund won the world cup championship with a convincing 2-0 win over Cruzeiro yesterday. Goals from Michael Zorc and Heiko Herrlich gave the European Cup-holders a well-deserved victory over Brazilian opponents, who reduced to ten men after Vitor, the right back, was sent off in the second half.

Zorc opened the scoring after 34 minutes, when he drove in a cross from Stéphane Chapuisat from the edge of the six-yard box. Herrlich added the second five minutes from the end, when he latched on to a low cross from Paulo Sousa.

Cruzeiro, who won their second Copa Libertadores this year, lost despite signing two Brazil forwards — Bebeto, a World Cup-winner in the United States three years ago, and Donizete — on loan before the game. Dortmund, whose form in the German league has been disappointing this season, despite impressing in the Champions' League, this time came the second German club, after Bayern Munich in 1976, to win the championship.

Ireland keep faith with McCarthy

MICK MCCARTHY yesterday signed a new two-year contract that keeps him in charge of Ireland until the European championship finals in the year 2000. The former Millwall manager took over from Jack Charlton two years ago, but his team failed to qualify for the World Cup finals in France when beaten 3-2 on aggregate by Belgium in the play-offs last month.

Now he has been given another chance, with the task of qualifying for the finals in 2000, when the championships will be hosted jointly by Belgium and Holland. McCarthy envisages a crucial role for Roy Keane, of Manchester United, in the qualifying phase.

"Tony Cascarino, Ray Houghton and Andy Townsend cannot go on for ever. Roy is obviously a player to build the team around," McCarthy said. "He has been very positive and upbeat since his cruciate ligament operation. There is no reason why he cannot come back as good a player as he was before his injury."

McCarthy is hoping to arrange a B international against Scotland in Dublin in February. That would be a chance to give a run-out to players like Graham Kavanagh, (Stoke City), Mark Kinsella (Charlton Athletic), Gareth Farrelly (Everton), Kevin Kilbane (West Bromwich Albion) and David Worrell (Blackburn Rovers), he said.

The senior side is likely to play Switzerland in March and there will also be games in Dublin in April and May. "No doubt teams drawn against England and Scotland in this week's World Cup draw in Marseilles will be looking for warm-up games against us at that time because of the similarity in the styles of play," McCarthy said.

Gary Megson was yesterday rewarded for Stockport County's surge up the first division when he was named Nationwide manager of the month for November. Megson, who took over at Edgeley Park in the summer after Dave Jones left for Southampton, has led the side to seventh in the table.

McAllister cleared of serious injury

GARY McALLISTER, the Scotland captain, was yesterday able to look towards taking his place in the World Cup after a scan revealed that he has suffered no significant knee damage at the weekend. It was thought that McAllister had suffered severe ligament damage after sustaining the injury in Coventry City's game against Leicester City at Highfield Road on Saturday when his knee gave way when he landed after an aerial challenge.

However, Gordon Strachan, the Coventry manager, said: "Gary has had the scan and there is nothing major wrong with him, which is good news for him and good news for us. He is still seeing a specialist and we have no idea as to how long he will be out of action."

The news will be welcomed by Craig Brown, the Scotland coach, who sees McAllister, 33, as the linchpin of his challenge at the World Cup in France next summer.

Clubs in the Scottish League premier division warned their lower division

counterparts last night that next Tuesday will be their last chance to join the big clubs' breakaway. Lex Gold, the chairman of Hibernian, has presented a formal legal offer outlining the financial support to clubs from the first, second and third divisions from the start of next season.

That is when the new top flight aims to be up and running and Gold has stressed the settlement presented is a non-negotiable final offer and, even if refused, progress will not be interrupted. "It was stated at the last management committee meeting on November 27 that the main reason our request [to resign from the league] was not granted was the absence of a legal document formally setting out the package on offer," Gold said. "We have now addressed that concern and made a formal legal offer and this is our final offer."

"If it is not accepted, it will be withdrawn and we will then consider how best to advance our own plans for establishing our new vision for Scottish football."

Redknapp backs Hartson to stay on target

HARRY REDKNAPP, the West Ham United manager, is backing John Hartson, the leading scorer in FA Cup Premiership, to keep delivering the goals — and avoid the kind of dry spell that is afflicting Ian Wright, the Welshman's former team-mate at Arsenal.

Redknapp jumped at the chance to sign Hartson near the end of last season when Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal manager, made him available

at a time when Wright's partnership with Dennis Bergkamp was producing goals galore.

Now Wright has hit a barren patch of six games, and Arsenal have not hit the target in five of their past six matches.

"I'm very positive about John," Redknapp said. "The way he is at the moment he is almost unplayable. He is such a strong, powerful kid, just 22, that it is almost frightening to think

what he'll be like in a few years' time when he's 25 or 26."

Hartson has consistently hit the target despite the loss of Paul Kitson, his own front-line partner, who has been out since September after surgery to repair a torn groin muscle.

Although he is back in training now, Kitson's return to Premiership action is likely to be delayed until after the rearranged match with Crystal Palace at Upton Park tonight. He is set, instead,

for another outing with the reserves against Swindon Town.

Hartson showed his marksmanship with a powerful header against Palace at Upton Park a month ago, but that goal was wiped out after the game was abandoned when the floodlights failed. The rerun should feature West Ham's Australia winger, Stan Lazaridis, who is due for his first Premiership outing since a groin injury in September.

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ing that the two feuding gangsters, Middlemass (Alun Armstrong) and Jezzard (Kevin McNally) are half-brothers, I told you it was difficult to keep up.

No problem keeping up with **Best Friends (BBC2)**; it's only about eight minutes long. Peter Waterman and Keith Jackson are best friends, have been since their childhood in Coventry. Waterman is an extremely well known and extremely rich record producer and Jackson is a tool designer. We heard Waterman explaining why he preferred to keep their friendship (he's my refuge and sanctuary from work!), but nothing about Waterman's other famous passion: trains. Jackson, who said he felt slightly excluded from Waterman's showbiz life, was interviewed with a model train lying on the carpet of his front room. Does his best mate ever let him

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CHANNEL 5 ON SATELLITE
Channel 5 is now broadcasting on the Astra Satellite. Transponder No 83 on the Astra Satellite.
Viewers with a Videocrypt decoder will be able to receive the channel free of charge. Frequencies for transponder No 83 are pictures: 10.92075 GHz; sound: 10.7702 and 7.20 MHz.

10.00am 5 News Early (4750715)
30 Milikishack! (7030574) 7.35 Kabla (9322067) 8.00 Havaikazoo (r) (416045)
30 WorldWide! Series on Victorian life at the significance of the Albert Memorial (4/10) (1906262)
00 Espresso Consumer affairs magazine (7550687) 10.00 Exclusive (495940) 10.30 Vanessa's Day With Zanna Rhodes (r) (7506405)
00 Lezza American chat show (387862) 11.50 Double Espresso (904349) 12.00 The Bold and the Beautiful (3801898) 12.30pm Family Affairs (r) (1050684)
00 5 News Update (88392154) 1.05 Sun's Beach (T) (4643086) 2.00 5's Compas (3848864)
00 Your Money or Your Wife (1960), by starring Donald Sinden and Peggy Cummins. A comedy about a newly married couple who learn that they will have to divorce in order to claim inheritance. Directed by Anthony Simmons (9033068)
00 5's Company: Late Extra (5638761)
00 Whiffle Audience participation quiz show hosted by Tim Vine (T) (4216628)
00 100 Per Cent (420824)
30 Family Affairs Clare and Melanie move in with Elsa (T) (4297593)
00 Exclusive Showbusiness news and gossip (5656406)
30 Animal Outposts: Dry Country Film. The species of fish that live in the sinkholes of Namibia (T) (429377)
00 Instant Gardens William Van Hage and the team continue to tackle an inner-rodew tree (5674154)
30 5 News (5653661)



Nick Nolte facing danger (8.00pm)

70 The Deep (1977) An underwater adventure, based on the novel by Peter Benchley, starring Robert Shaw, Jacqueline Bisset and Nick Nolte. Nolte plays a shark hunter (5072689)

chat (5451593)
0am Prisoner: Cell Block H (5397617)
0 Live and Dangerous Includes American college football and basketball (64555810)
5 The Streets of San Francisco starring Karl Malden (5385029)
0 100 Per Cent (r) (7479704)

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FOOTBALL 44

Leading marksman sets his sights on Cup record

SPORT

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 3 1997

CRICKET 46

Lara feels the heat as West Indies slide continues



Fifa formula leaves anxious Hoddle fearing 'group of death' in World Cup draw

Hopes recede as England take pot luck

FROM OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT, IN MARSEILLES

THE Fifa delegation had walked off the stage. One after another, Sepp Blatter, Lennart Johansson and Michel Platini descended the steps into the sea of cameramen and lights. Behind them, two officials took the replica of the World Cup off the table and packed it in bubble-wrap. And then, in the conference hall at the Palais de Congress, the agonising over England's fate began.

Some minutes earlier, Blatter, the general secretary of the world governing body, had confirmed the worst fears of Glenn Hoddle, the coach, and legions of England supporters when he revealed that the failure to qualify for the 1994 finals had effectively cost them the chance to be numbered among the top seeds in France next summer.

As expected, Brazil, France, Germany, Argentina, Italy, Spain, Holland and Romania were placed in that privileged category. To make matters worse for England, the system that Fifa will use to make the draw here tomorrow raises the uncomfortable prospect of Hoddle's team finding itself pitched into a "group of death", condemned to a grim struggle against three highly-rated teams just to make the last 16.

Fifa calculated the top seeds on a complex formula based on a combination of performances in the past three World Cup finals and its own world rankings over the past two years. England finished joint ninth with Bulgaria. "The decisive element was the column that registered zero for 1994," Keith Cooper, the Fifa director of communications, said.

Their omission, coupled with Fifa's novel formula for the draw — which divides the remaining 24 teams into three

bunches based on geographical considerations, but precludes any of the eight groups including more than two European teams — means that the bad luck of the draw could place England with Brazil, Croatia and Nigeria, with only two teams able to qualify.

The permutations, though, are endless. At the more optimistic end of the scale lies the possibility that England — or Scotland — could be drawn with Romania, the weakest of the seeds, Jamaica and Iran.

As the repercussions of the seedings were examined and re-examined — and moments of levity amid the furrowing of

England are planning an international match against the United States as part of their five-game build-up to the World Cup finals next year. Subject to the teams not being grouped together in the World Cup draw tomorrow, they will play in Washington on March 24 or 25. Croatia are also keen to play England and are among around thirty possible opponents that the FA has been considering.

brows were sought concocting a group comprising Argentina, England, the United States and Iran — it gradually became apparent that the best outcome might be a happy medium that saw England drawn with one strong team and two weaker ones.

"I am a great believer in whatever will be, will be," Hoddle said. "Whoever we get, we will handle the cards we have been dealt. We had a tough qualifying group and we won it, so there is no reason for anyone in the nation to be downhearted. We will take what comes. I do know that

when the coaches of the seeds turn up in Marseilles, they will be saying: 'Let's hope we avoid England'."

"I will not lose any sleep if we are pitched in with Brazil. Whether we beat them or lose to them, we will have two other group games and then we would not have to play them again until the final. It would be an advantage if Brazil were in our group. What we do not really want, though, is Brazil, Croatia and Nigeria. We do not want a 'group of death' situation."

"The only thing that is strange and needs to be readjusted is that a team [Italy] who... have got in the back door via the play-offs should be seeded. That situation has crept up on Fifa but it is not a surprise to me that we have not been seeded. It has been decided on us not getting there in 94. Just let's make sure we never fail to qualify for a World Cup again and suffer in this way."

England, who will make nearly £4 million in Fifa increments if they progress to the final, were also left without any hint about where they might play their three group games, only that they will each be at a different venue.

Platini, a member of the organising committee, made it clear that he had wanted geographical considerations again to be taken into account so that Spain, for instance, would be placed in a group whose matches were played in venues in the south and west of France, such as Toulouse and Bordeaux (group B), and not Paris and Lens (group F). His recommendations, though, had been ignored. "If we allocate teams to specific stadia," Johansson, the president of Uefa, the European governing body, said, "there



Blatter, the Fifa general secretary, reveals Brazil as one of the eight seeds for the World Cup finals next summer. Watching him yesterday is Cooper

would not be much of a draw left."

That also raises the possibility of England having to play a match either in Saint-Etienne or Nantes, the only two of the ten World Cup stadiums still to have perimeter fencing. In Nantes, it is the mayor who objects to dismantling them; in Saint-Etienne, it is the chief of police.

"Take the fences away and people are not aggressive," Blatter said. "Fans become aggressive because they are behind bars. It is prisoners and wild animals who should be behind bars."

A few hours after he spoke, Fifa sources revealed that the English and Italian football associations would be fined after the trouble that marred their qualifying tie in Rome on October 11, a punishment that

amounts to two slaps on the wrist.

Hoddle, though, boosted by the news that Sol Campbell would not be suspended for the first group game, ended on a note of overriding optimism, stressing that the World Cup would be a chance for England's young players such as Paul Scholes and David Beckham to "make their name and become world superstars". The pressure was not on them, Hoddle said, but on more experienced players such as David Seaman, Alan Shearer and Paul Gascoigne. "The world will know they are coming," he said.

The amnesty over yellow cards in the qualifying campaign will also allow John Collins, the Monaco midfielder, to play in Scotland's opening fixture.

Pele suffers repeat of snub at World Cup ceremony

By ROB HUGHES

PELE is to be excluded from the World Cup draw ceremony in Marseilles tomorrow. In a re-enactment of the draw in Las Vegas four years ago, when João Havelange, the Fifa president, overruled prominent members of the Fifa administration to bar Pelé from the stage, the finest living footballer will be absent again. Pelé will be in Marseilles, but plans to watch the draw on television from a hotel room two minutes from the Stade Vélodrome.

"We are desperately hoping the old man will embrace Pelé and invite him in," one Fifa insider said. However, Pelé, having allowed himself to be talked into sitting in the audience in Las Vegas on a sponsors' ticket, is too dignified for that to happen a second time.

The problem between Havelange, 81, and Pelé involves family and sports politics. Pelé is Minister for Sport in Brazil, where Ricardo Teixeira, the son-in-law of Havelange, heads the football federation. "I think Havelange has never forgiven the fact that I told the truth about Teixeira," Pelé said yesterday. "It's very sad, but I have a duty to speak against corruption." Teixeira denied the allegations at the time, but took no further action.

Before the 1994 draw, Pelé had given a detailed account

of allegations that Teixeira profited personally by switching a television contract. More recently, Pelé has drafted a bill for the Brazilian Congress that would allow clubs to form their own leagues and to break from the federation. The former player, who graced four World Cups and was on the winning side in two World Cup finals, has a mandate to stimulate the roots of Brazilian soccer and to clean up corruption.

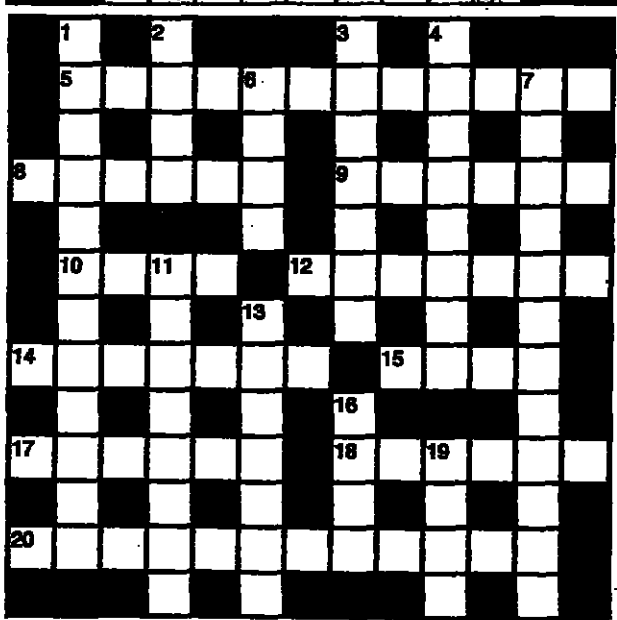
He cites the protection by the federation, the CBF, of elite clubs. Put simply, they are not allowed to fail. They can finish in the relegation zone, but not go down. Rules are bent, leagues are restructured, so that Sao Paulo in

1990, Grêmio in 1992 and Fluminense this year were all spared the drop after finishing bottom.

It appears that Havelange, whose word in Fifa has been law since 1974, has no opponents within the executive who dare intervene. Fifa statutes encourage him to do this because they state that no individual can take to law the authority of a football association or federation.

"It is farcical," a former Fifa employee observed. "Pelé is the greatest player the game has known and the best ambassador and, through one man's spite, he is prevented from his rightful place at the table. I just hope Pelé remains strong, because these overblown affairs are belittled without him." They are indeed.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1267

ACROSS

- 5 Simple task: bit of Madeira? (1,5,2,4)
- 8 Rank in society (6)
- 9 Prickly: difficult (problem) (6)
- 10 Surprise attack (4)
- 12 Work for five players (7)
- 14 One as Amos, Cassandra (7)
- 15 Rugged peak (4)
- 17 One drug-dependent (6)
- 18 Dawn goddess: ship coining Bolsheviks, 1917 (6)
- 20 Inauspicious (5-3-4)

DOWN

- 1 Henehard its Mayor (Har-dy) (12)
- 2 Suddenly spurn (suitor) (4)
- 3 Speaker's dais (7)
- 4 A glass; a ship (8)
- 6 Beer barrel (4)
- 7 Toddler school (12)
- 11 Unspoken but understood (9)
- 13 Hour of retirement (7)
- 16 Warily unforthcoming (4)
- 19 Wander at large (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1266

- ACROSS: 1 Bulgaria 5 Whim 9 Not mince words
10 Weld 11 Settler 13 Hushed 15 Canyon 18 Ransome
20 Acts 23 Controversial 24 Tame 25 Animator
DOWN: 1 Bird 2 Little 3 Ariadne 4 Incise 6 Hartley
7 Misprint 8 Swat 12 Short cut 14 Synonym
16 Anagram 17 Leaven 19 Ours 21 Twist 22 Blur

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HOW THE DRAW FOR FRANCE 98 WILL WORK

The 32 qualifiers for the World Cup will be divided into four pots. These are: Pot 1: The Seeds (eight teams); Pot 2: Europe (nine teams); Pot 3: Africa, Central America (eight teams); Pot 4: South America, Asia (seven teams).

TOMORROW'S DRAW WILL BE IN THREE STAGES

STAGE ONE: Seeds will be drawn into eight groups from A to H. Brazil, the holders, will be allocated Group A. France, the hosts, will be in Group C.

STAGE TWO: A draw will then determine the order in which the remaining pots are drawn.

STAGE THREE: (i) If Europe is drawn before the South American/Asia pot, the first eight European teams out of the hat will be placed in group order from A-H. The ninth European team will then join the seven teams in pot four.

(ii) The ninth European team will then be placed with either Brazil or Argentina (also determined by draw), so that no group contains more than two teams from Europe.

(iii) If the South America/Asia pot is to be drawn before the Europe pot, there will first be one team drawn from Europe and allocated to either the Brazil or Argentina group.

(Seeds)	(Europe)	(Africa, Central America)	(South America, Asia)
Brazil	England	Nigeria	Chile
France	Scotland	Cameroon	Paraguay
Spain	Belgium	South Africa	Colombia
Holland	Bulgaria	Tanzania	Iran
Germany	Croatia	Morocco	Japan
Argentina	Yugoslavia	United States	Saudi Arabia
Italy	Norway	Mexico	South Korea
Romania	Denmark	Jamaica	
	Australia		



HODDLE'S WORST-CASE SCENARIO

Brazil, England, Croatia, Nigeria

BEST-CASE SCENARIO

Romania, England, Jamaica, Iran

Injuries limit chance for change

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

FOR all the brave words from the England management, many of them totally justified, after a draw and two defeats they are faced with an intractable problem when they name today the XV to play New Zealand at Twickenham on Saturday. They know what their prime candidates can offer and it does not match the weight of shot that the All Blacks bring with them.

No one should expect that and, in their heart of hearts, the team management will have acknowledged it. Instead they must compose a team that is as competitive as it can possibly be — and Lawrence Dallaglio, the captain, will not let it be anything else — and which remains faithful to Clive Woodward's ambitions for a wider game.

There is no point in a damage limitation exercise, partly because England do not have the armoury for that either. They must go out and play in the New Zealand's faces, as they did at Old Trafford and as Ireland and Wales did in their respective internationals, but they must also recover the sense of discipline that slipped at Twickenham last week against South Africa: they may concede the playground

to the All Blacks, but there is no point in conceding the moral ground too.

Their options are limited by injury — to Mike Catt, Tony Diprose and Tim Rodber, for example — and the fact that such players as Adebayo, Adebayo, Tim Stimpson and Mark Regan played in the A team against the New Zealanders at Leicester last night, suggests that they will not be asked to start at Twickenham. It is not clear what Adebayo has done to earn demotion after starting against both Australia and New Zealand and being replaced by Austin Healey on both occasions.

Nick Mallett, the South Africa coach, expressed his admiration for Adebayo and the Bath player remains the most potent finisher in club rugby; he does not have quite the edge of speed one would wish in an international wing, there is no one obviously better. John Bentley, his replacement against South Africa, was also taken off in the second half so that remains an area for considerable discussion.

Phil de Glanville, who missed the match with South Africa because of damaged

ankle ligaments, trained yesterday and deserves a recall, not only on previous form but for the experience he brings. Nick Greenstock enjoyed as good a match as he could have hoped for in his stead, quite apart from scoring England's sole try, but with a new mixture in midfield enforced by the absence of Catt, De Glanville is entitled to a return.

Paul Grayson, the most experienced fly half available, is the only option as Catt's replacement which creates the strongest of cases for Matt Dawson, his club partner, to



Johnson: stability

remain, even if Kyran Bracken has recovered from his shoulder injury. Grayson admits that fortune has not favoured his rivals — Catt and Alex King — but he has suffered in the same way himself: "I was injured at the end of last season, so it's a case of swings and roundabouts," he said.

"I started the season as third choice, coming back from injury. I was playing at full back and centre as well as fly half so I didn't have any right to expect to be top of the pile. But with the situation that has developed, it would be an exciting prospect to play against New Zealand."

That is the attitude the selectors must depend upon, players enthused at the prospect of competing with the best. Changes in the pack are likely to be minimal, the recall of Martin Johnson after suspension in place of Danny Grewcock the most obvious one; that will add stability to the set pieces though it will also bring iron to All Black souls since it was Johnson's punch on Justin Marshall that caused them such anguish at Old Trafford. His presence in England's ranks will add the final touch to New Zealand's preparations.

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